

## Butler suspends air surveillance over Iraq

WASHINGTON (R) — Chief U.N. weapons inspector Richard Butler said on Monday he was suspending flights by U.S. U-2 spy planes over Iraq while the U.N. Security Council debates the future of the operation to control Iraq's arsenal. He also acknowledged that the operation, known as UNSCOM, may be revamped as a result of the crisis with Baghdad but insisted the dismantling operation in Iraq was not finished and rejected suggestions that he should resign. "UNSCOM is not dead," he told a conference on weapons nonproliferation sponsored by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Butler predicted the Security Council would reach a compromise on the inspection group's future operations in Iraq, halted by Baghdad late last year and thrown into further doubt by four days of U.S. and British air strikes in December.

# Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation  
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية - الراي

## White House rejects impeachment charges in official response

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The White House launched its effort to keep President Bill Clinton in office Monday, calling on the Senate to drop impeachment charges against him. Clinton's legal team rejected charges of perjury and obstruction of justice in answer to a formal summons sent by the Senate which is conducting the first impeachment trial in 131 years. Clinton lawyers, arguing that the two impeachment charges should be dismissed by the Senate, said they failed to rise to the level of "high crimes and misdemeanors." (See story on page 4)

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## Leading Albanian in Kosovo shot dead

PRISTINA (AFP) — Enver Maloku, head of the Kosovo Albanian Information Centre (KIC), a news agency run by ethnic Albanians, was shot dead Monday, the OSCE said. Maloku "was shot dead at 4:10 p.m. [1510 GMT] in front of his house here in Pristina," said Sandy Blyth, spokesman for the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe's (OSCE) monitoring mission in Kosovo. The attack was confirmed by Serb sources.

## Peacekeepers claim gains in Sierra Leone

FREETOWN (R) — West Africa's regional body said its Nigerian-led troops were driving rebels out of Sierra Leone's capital on Monday and had retaken the presidency. The statement came hours after witnesses heard heavy shelling and gunfire coming from the central district of Freetown which the ECOMOG intervention force lost to the rebels on Jan. 6. "The rebels are now being pushed out of Freetown following reinforcement by ECOMOG," the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) said.

## Village in border zone hit by mortar fire

MARIJAYOUN (AFP) — Anti-Israeli mortar fire Monday rocked the village of Rum in the Jezzine region held by the South Lebanon Army (SLA), the Israeli-backed militia said. Some 30 rounds fell on the Christian village, the SLA said, adding that there had been no casualties in the attack but that 10 houses had been hit. The two-hour bombardment also destroyed seven cars, the militia said. Israel maintains an intelligence presence in the Jezzine region but insists it falls outside the border strip it occupies as a "security zone." No group has yet claimed the attack.

## Japan warns cult is regaining power

TOKYO (AFP) — Japan's Aum Supreme Truth sect, blamed for the 1995 nerve gas attack on the Tokyo subway, is regrouping and building up strength, a top government official warned Monday. "Aum Shinrikyo is regaining power and is now two thirds of its former size," Chief Cabinet Secretary Hiromu Nonaka told reporters. "We have to watch the cult carefully. In my opinion, it is regrettably an Antisubversive Activities Law was not applied," to the cult, he said. The group escaped being outlawed in January 1997 because a legal panel ruled there was no reason to believe the cult could still be a threat to society.

## Man charged with tax evasion on donkey income

CAIRO (AP) — A Luxor man is facing prison for failing to pay taxes on income earned from giving rides to tourists on his donkey around Pharaonic sites. The tax department says Ragab Mahmoud Mohammed owes it 1,175 pounds (\$354) in unpaid taxes for the last year. If the money is not paid Mahmoud could be jailed for tax evasion, the Al Wafd newspaper reported Monday. It gave no details of the possible jail term.

# House endorses government's JD2,160m budget for 1999

AMMAN (Petra) — The Lower House of Parliament Monday endorsed the state's 1999 fiscal budget of JD2,160 million with an estimated deficit of seven per cent and approved recommendations submitted by the House Finance Committee.

Of the 67 deputies who attended the session, 55 voted in favour of the draft budget law, which is to be referred to the Senate for further debate and endorsement.

Responding to the vote, Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh said the government appreciated the House's decision, particularly the efforts of the Finance Committee in advising and providing constructive ideas and recommendations to the government.

Tarawneh said the proposals submitted during the budget debate will be taken into consideration to help the government in carrying out its duty and fulfilling its mandate.

In reference to the deputies' demand that the

government act on the country's debt problem, the prime minister said the government will step up contacts with creditor nations in order to reschedule its payments.

The government, he said, will hold back on guaranteeing loans to public companies to avoid compounding its debts and will encourage these institutions to boost their efficiency and productivity.

According to Tarawneh, the government is committed to providing the means for the Armed Forces and security services to carry out their responsibility of ensuring national security.

He said social services will target underprivileged families, continue to provide them with monthly financial aid through the National Aid Fund and help the poor start up small income-generating projects through Employment and Development Fund loans.

The premier said the government is proceeding with the implementation of a national safety net which

entails improving infrastructure services in the less developed regions, including Palestinian refugee camps.

Tarawneh said the government is committed to implementing plans for education as well as a national health service programme, expected to be completed by the year 2010.

Tarawneh said that to encourage investments, the government sold part of its share in the Jordan Cement Factories Company to a French firm, depositing the JD72 million it received from the sale in the Central Bank to be spent on development, not current expenditures.

During 1998, he said, JD480 million in capital was invested in the country, up from JD380 million in 1997. The prime minister pledged continued government efforts to boost investments in production and development fields.

Referring to the deputies' remarks about the agricultural sector, the prime minister said the government allo-

cated JD23 million for 1999 for soft loans to farmers and has already rescheduled the debts of 40,000 farmers, which amount to a total of JD60 million to be paid in three to 10 years. He said 90 per cent of the loans will benefit small farmers.

Discussing tourism promotion, Tarawneh said JD3 million has been allocated to finance a special committee's plans to create the most appropriate atmosphere for tourism.

He said a long-term \$60 million soft loan to Jordan granted by the Japanese government will also be spent on projects to promote the tourism industry.

The prime minister outlined plans by the ministries of education and health to upgrade health and education services.

Referring to corruption, Tarawneh emphasised that the government is determined to pursue a policy of holding to account and punishing persons who abuse their positions or become involved in financial and administrative corruption.

# 'Jordan expects additional \$100m in U.S. aid over next two years'

By Caroline Faraj

AMMAN — Jordan is expected to receive \$100 million in additional aid in two equal payments from the U.S. over the next 21 months, a senior Jordanian official said Monday.

"The U.S. administration has pledged to seek from Congress an extra \$100 million in economic assistance funds to Jordan," Ambassador to Washington Marwan Muasher told the Jordan Times.

Muasher said Jordan's current economic difficulties were a main issue of in-depth discussion during His Majesty King Hussein's last Tuesday meeting with U.S. President Bill Clinton at the White House.

"During last Tuesday's

meeting, His Majesty argued for additional economic assistance to the Kingdom, due to the present difficult economic situation and needs," Muasher said.

He said the American administration reacted to the King's argument by pledging to seek an extra \$100 million in economic assistance that will be divided over two years.

"We expect to receive the first extra \$50 million in October 1999, and the rest in October 2000," Muasher said.

HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, announced on Saturday that the King briefed him on the recent results of his talks with U.S. administration officials and on the administration's intent to encourage

increased investment in Jordan and provide additional aid.

Last year, the U.S. Congress agreed to allocate \$225 million to Jordan in 1999, \$150 million in economic assistance and \$75 million in military aid.

During a brief visit to Amman on Dec. 15, U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright pledged to "seek from Congress an extra \$200 million in security assistance funds to bolster Jordan's ability to cope with regional turmoil."

The extra \$200 million is to be divided over three years (approximately \$60 million per year).

Muasher explained that should Congress approve the additional packages, the Kingdom would receive a

total of \$341 million, \$200 million in economic and \$141 million in military aid, in 1999.

The ambassador pointed out that the U.S. administration also promised to offer all possible assistance to Jordan in order to support its national economy.

"The U.S. promised to support Jordan's demands for increasing trade with the Palestinian National Authority areas," Muasher said.

Referring to the recent agreement signed between Jordan and the U.S. on trade and investment, the ambassador said, "We have signed with the U.S. a framework which is considered an introduction for negotiations for establishing a free trade area soon."

# Israeli elections cannot postpone Palestinian state, Arafat says

## Peres urges negotiations on state

RAMALLAH (Agencies) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat insisted on Monday that the announcement of a Palestinian state in May this year cannot be put off because of Israeli general elections due later in the same month.

"We believe that there are important dates that cannot be ignored, bypassed or let slide without proper accounting and without a proper decision," Arafat told an international conference of some 200 businessmen and luminaries gathered at a hotel in Ramallah.

"The coming fourth of May is one of these important dates. We cannot bypass that date simply because one of the parties wants to keep it hostage to its narrow domestic calculations," Arafat said.

The Palestinians have frequently threatened to announce their own state in May on the grounds that, under the terms of the first Oslo agreement, final status talks on the boundaries of Israel and the Palestinian territories, Jerusalem, water resources and other issues are supposed to have been com-

pleted. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has countered that such a unilateral declaration will meet with Israeli retaliation, usually taken to mean the annexation of those parts of the West Bank which Israel continues to control.

The conference, which counts a host of Nobel laureates and former world leaders amongst its delegates in addition to some 150 international businessmen, has been organised by former Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres to add economic impetus to the stalled Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

For his part, in an earlier address, Peres urged Israeli negotiations on a Palestinian state as he delivered the first-ever address by an Israeli to the Palestinian legislature.

"It is in the Israeli interest to see a Palestinian state taking place as a result of an agreement — a state with a democracy and a flourishing economy," Peres told members of the legislature meeting in Ramallah in a joint session with the international guests of

his Centre for Peace.

"We have to negotiate to reach an agreement. There are no unsolvable problems. Unsolvability problems can be solved through negotiations like in South Africa," Peres told the audience, which included former South African Prime Minister Frederik de Klerk and Nobel laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

Peres also told the audience that he was optimistic that such a state was coming.

"We are not far from the date" when Arafat will be president of state of Palestine and when the Palestinians will establish their own state, Peres told the conference.

In his welcoming address, Palestinian legislative council speaker and senior negotiator Ahmad Qurei struck a downbeat note describing the current condition of the peace process with Israel as being in "dire straits."

"The Israeli government has frozen agreements it signed and has refused to implement the most recent memorandum to which it committed itself at Wye River," Qurei said.

# Iraq rejects Saudi proposal to ease sanctions

BAGHDAD (AP) — Just hours after Gulf ministers gave cautious support to easing U.N. sanctions against Iraq, Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz said Monday they didn't go far enough.

The proposal on sanctions, put forward by Saudi Arabia, was discussed Sunday by Arab Gulf ministers in the Saudi port city of Jeddah.

There was no formal announcement on their decision, but one Gulf official told The Associated Press Monday that the ministers gave the initiative "general preliminary approval."

He said the idea would be carried to a meeting of Arab League foreign ministers scheduled Jan. 24 in Cairo, Egypt. He spoke on condition of anonymity.

Aziz, however, was quoted by the official Iraqi News Agency as saying Iraq "categorically rejects the so-called Saudi initiative."

"Saudi Arabia has been a party to the aggression against Iraq since 1990," Aziz said. "Therefore it is not expected that it will come up with positive and fair proposals in favour of Iraq."

Aziz said Iraq will accept only "a total lifting of sanctions."

The sanctions were imposed after Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and its Gulf neighbours were part of the U.S.-backed coalition that drove Iraq from Kuwait in the 1991 Gulf war.

The U.N. Security Council has said that the sanctions — which limit Iraqi oil sales — will not be lifted until Iraq complies with Gulf war cease-fire resolutions and eliminates its weapons of mass destruction.

Iraqi newspapers reported Monday that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, chairing his second cabinet meeting this year, asked his ministers to outline measures they have taken in anticipation of further American and British airstrikes.

It gave no details on what the ministers told Saddam. On Sunday, the London-based Asharq Al Awsat quoted an unnamed Saudi source as saying that Saudi Arabia was recommending that Iraq be allowed to buy and sell all goods — except military equipment or material that could be used for military purposes.

If approved by Arab League foreign ministers later this month, the idea will be presented officially to the

# Iraq threat to U.N. relations would be 'major challenge': Annan

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — An Iraqi parliament request to President Saddam Hussein to sever relations with the United Nations would pose a "major challenge" if taken up, U.N. chief Kofi Annan said Monday.

Annan was asked to comment on the Iraqi parliament statement as he arrived at U.N. headquarters after the Christmas and New Year break.

Asked about the possible threat to U.N. relations, Annan responded: "This would pose a major challenge for the Security Council and the U.N."

"I do not know if this will be followed through, it has happened in the past that the Revolutionary Council has not always gone with the parliament," he added.

"There are lots of noises coming out of Iraq, and I think we need to wait for a while to assess what is actually happening, including the threats against Kuwait and Saudi Arabia."

United Nations, Gulf officials have said.

The goal apparently is to calm the Arab public, which has become increasingly concerned about the sufferings of Iraq's 22 million people under the sanctions.

But the Saudis and their allies also are becoming increasingly irritated at Saddam, who has called on Arabs to rise up and overthrow leaders who do not support Iraq.

The Gulf official said the Gulf ministers discussed Iraq's bellicose statements during their five-hour meet-

ing in Jeddah.

He said the ministers found the comments "disturbing" and a "source of anxiety."

Iraq has been especially outspoken of late about Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

The Iraqi parliament, which rubber stamps Saddam's decisions, on Sunday adopted a statement which said Iraq "holds the Saudi and Kuwait regimes fully responsible for the U.S. and British aggression on Iraq" and reserves the right to seek compensation.

# U.S. planes attack two Iraqi sites in northern zone

## Kuwait puts army on red alert

Agencies

U.S. FIGHTER jets attacked two Iraqi missile sites in the northern no-fly zone on Monday in the latest military clash with Baghdad, the Pentagon said.

No damage or casualties were reported on the U.S. side, and the Pentagon said all of the American planes had returned safely to base in Incirlik, Turkey.

Army Lt. Col. Steve Campbell, a U.S. Defence Department spokesman, told Reuters both incidents had occurred at about 10:45 a.m. local time, near Mosul in northern Iraq.

"In both cases, coalition aircraft were illuminated by Iraqi air defence missile systems," Campbell said.

In one case, two U.S. F-15 warplanes responded by dropping two precision-guided bombs on an Iraqi missile launch site. And in the second incident an F-16 jet fired a High-Speed Anti-Radiation Missile (HARM) at another site.

"There was no damage to coalition aircraft, which all returned safely to base and damage to Iraqi forces is currently being assessed,"

Campbell added. He said it was not yet clear whether the U.S. had hit the Iraqi targets.

Earlier, Capt. Melinda Morgan, a spokeswoman for the U.S. European Command in Germany, said the air crews had acted in self-defence to suppress a ground-based missile launch site.

U.S. officials said in Washington that American and British planes would continue to monitor the no-fly zones despite Iraqi opposition to the patrols.

"The coalition will continue to enforce the no-fly zones vigorously. These provocations are a reminder of the threat that President Saddam poses to the region and the need for vigilance in containing that threat," National Security Council spokesman David Leavy said.

It was the fifth confrontation in no-fly zones over northern and southern Iraq in two weeks between Iraq and U.S.

and British forces. British forces were not involved in the latest clash.

Those confrontations have been increasing since the

United States and Britain launched four days of heavy air raids against Iraq last month after Baghdad refused to cooperate with U.N. weapons inspectors.

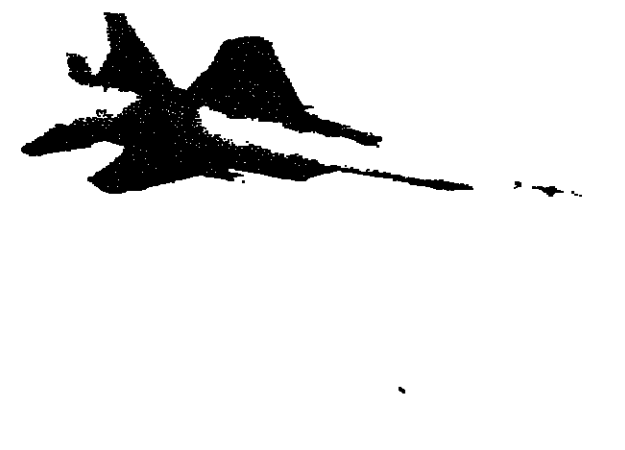
President Saddam said after last month's air raids that Baghdad no longer would recognise the no-fly zones, set up after the 1991 Gulf War to protect Kurds in the north and Shiite Muslims in the south from attacks on them by Iraqi forces.

Also Monday, newspapers said Kuwait has put its armed forces on maximum alert and is preparing to call up reservists after emergency talks over Iraq's latest threats against the emirate.

Defence Minister Sheikh Salem Sabah Al Salem Al Sabah, who chaired a meeting of the Defence Council late Sunday, said in the reports that all army units had been put on maximum combat alert.

He added that preparations were to be made to draft in reserve servicemen "in light of the Iraqi regime's recent threats to the state of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia."

(Continued on page 2)



This file photo shows a U.S. F15 soaring through the skies in an undisclosed location in February 1998. U.S. F15s and an F16 fired on two missile sites in Iraq's northern no-fly zone on Monday in two separate incidents, after they were illuminated by Iraqi radar (AFP photo)



## Netanyahu's political mentor to challenge him for leadership

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Moshe Arens, a former Israeli minister and one-time mentor to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, announced on Monday that he will challenge his ex-protégé for the premiership and leadership of the Likud Party.

"I came here to declare my candidacy for the leadership of the Likud and for premiership," Arens said at a press conference in Tel Aviv.

"In the last few weeks I have been following the crisis within the Likud with great fear, watching first-rate people leaving the party knowing that this may adversely affect the election results," said Arens.

"Many people approached me in the streets and told me that only I could save the Likud and unite it," Arens added.

Arens, 73, who served as defence and foreign minister between 1983 and 1992, said he opposed the 1993-95 Oslo agreements and the October 1998 Wye River land-for-security agreements.

"Oslo is a very bad agreement and we are paying a heavy price for it. I was not enthusiastic about Wye, but we need to implement it if the other side fulfils its obligations," Arens said.

Arens has long been considered among Netanyahu's staunchest backers. His decision marks the latest in a series of rifts within the Likud

party and a new blow for the prime minister's hopes of winning re-election in the May 17 vote.

Arens called for Zeev "Benny" Begin and for Dan Meridor, two former members of Likud who left the party to form their own parties, to come back to their "home" — the Likud Party.

"I also call on my friends Yitzhak Mordechai and Limor Livnat to stay in the party," Arens said in a reference to the defence minister and communications minister, who are expected to announce their political intentions soon.

Arens withdrew from active politics after the Likud government was deposed by the Labour Party under the late Yitzhak Rabin in 1992, but remains a powerful voice in the party.

Internal polls within Likud show Arens would receive only 25 per cent of the vote, however, compared to 60 per cent for Netanyahu, in a central committee leadership election scheduled for Feb. 8.

But his decision to challenge Netanyahu is a severe symbolic blow to the 49-year-old prime minister, who has already seen two other leading Likud figures quit the party to challenge him for the premiership.

While Begin and Meridor belong to Netanyahu's generation, Arens represents the Likud old guard — and his

decision highlights the extent of disenchantment with the prime minister within the party. Arens' candidacy was quickly welcomed by former prime minister Yitzhak Shamir, Netanyahu's predecessor as Likud leader and recently a severe critic of the incumbent premier.

Israeli newspapers quoted aides to Netanyahu as saying the prime minister was "furious" with his former mentor.

But on Israel Radio Netanyahu said, "Anyone who wants to [run] is entitled to do so."

"But it is clear to me that I will receive the support of the Likud members as well as that of the public."

Another Likud stalwart, Uzi Landau, a nationalist hardliner who heads the parliamentary defence and foreign affairs committee, is also challenging Netanyahu for the Likud leadership but could step down in favour of Arens. Arens personally brought Netanyahu into politics in the early 1980s — hiring the then U.S. furniture salesman as a diplomatic liaison in the Washington embassy.

He later supported Netanyahu in his bid to take over Likud after the party's 1992 election loss.

But after Netanyahu won election as prime minister in May 1996, Arens grew increasingly critical of his autocratic style.



An Iraqi child looks at a new pair of shoes at Souq Al-Arabi market in Baghdad Monday, January 11, 1999. Iraqis were shopping prior to the feast ending Ramadan. Muslim countries will celebrate, Eid Al Fiter, the end of the fasting month of Ramadan this upcoming weekend (AP Photo/Murad Sezer)

## Blair rejects charges of snub to Europe over Iraq

PARIS (R) — British Prime Minister Tony Blair has rejected charges that Britain failed its European Union partners by joining in U.S.-led air strikes against Iraq.

In an article published on Monday in the French daily newspaper Liberation, Blair said Britain's participation in last month's attacks would enhance its influence both in Europe and the United States.

"I do not accept for one second the idea that by

intervening alongside the Americans my government chose the United States over other friends and allies in Europe and elsewhere," Blair wrote.

"Equally, we will be more able to play a prominent role, in Europe and elsewhere, if our partners know that we are influential in Washington," he said.

French politicians have criticised Britain for going it alone in the latest crisis without consulting its EU

partners, especially since it had just agreed with France to promote European defence.

Blair said Britain had received offers of military help from several of its EU partners earlier in the crisis.

But for military reasons it was technically complex to bring them into an operation which was easy to mount between two close allies who had both deployed forces in the region.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### More Arab countries to attend summit

CAIRO (R) — Fourteen Arab League members have so far said they will attend an Arab foreign ministers' meeting on Iraq, sources at the Arab League in Cairo said on Monday. Mauritania, Somalia, Djibouti and the Palestinians are the latest Arab League members to confirm their attendance at the meeting, called after last month's U.S.-British air strikes on Iraq and already postponed once because of Arab differences. Ten countries had said earlier they would join the talks scheduled to take place in Cairo on Jan. 24 — Syria, Egypt, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Lebanon, Sudan, Tunisia, Yemen and Qatar. The foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates met late on Sunday in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia and newspapers said they were united in their stand on Iraq ahead of the foreign ministers' meeting.

### Journalist's prison sentence cancelled

KUWAIT (AP) — An appeals court on Monday cancelled a jail sentence given a Kuwaiti journalist for publishing a joke deemed insulting to Islam. It instead imposed a fine of 50 dinars (\$165). In June, the Court of First Instance sentenced Mohammad Al Saqar, editor of the independent daily Al Qabas, to six months in prison for printing the joke. In the joke, a teacher asks his students: "Why did God kick Adam and Eve out of heaven?" A student answers: "Because they hadn't paid the rent."

### Iranian official to visit Iraq

TEHRAN (AFP) — A senior Iranian official was due to visit Iraq on Monday to discuss improving relations between the two neighbours as well as the latest developments in the region, the official news agency IRNA reported. Mohammad Sadre, deputy foreign minister on Arab and African affairs, will meet with Iraqi officials "as part of Iran's initiative to peacefully settle existing problems in the region," IRNA said. Iran and Iraq are still recovering from their 1980-1988 war with several issues, mainly the fate of prisoners of war, still unresolved.

### Khaddam receives Hawatmeh

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Syria and a Palestinian opposition faction condemned Monday the "reckless policies of Israeli Prime Minister [Benjamin] Netanyahu" and stressed the need for Arab solidarity. Syrian Vice President Abdel Halim Khaddam and head of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) Nayef Hawatmeh also stressed the need for Palestinian unity, a statement from the group said. The two sides further stressed the importance of working to get the sanctions against Iraq lifted. Syrian Information Minister Mohammad Salsam took part in the meeting, as did Ramzi Rabah and Fahd Suleiman of the DFLP politburo.

### Vedrine to meet Sharon this week

PARIS (AFP) — French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine is expected to meet his Israeli counterpart Ariel Sharon this week, paying his first official visit to France since being given the portfolio last October. The Israeli embassy Monday said that Sharon was expected to visit Paris, will hold talks and meet with Vedrine on Thursday. Sharon, however, has no other meetings scheduled with French officials. He is due to fly in Wednesday evening to outline Israeli foreign policy as a guest speaker at a forum and meet French Jewish leaders, and to return home Sunday.

### Truce panel holds first meeting

NAQOURA (AFP) — The international committee monitoring the ceasefire in south Lebanon met Monday to discuss eight Lebanese and five Israeli complaints of truce violations, the Lebanese delegation said. The panel, in its first meeting this year, convened at the United Nations headquarters at the coastal town of Naqoura on the Israeli-Lebanese border, they said. Lebanon is accusing Israel of eight violations of the April 1996 ceasefire agreement not to attack civilians or launch assaults from civilian areas.

### Israeli surfers assault Hizbollah site

BEIRUT (AFP) — Israeli Internet surfers have been bombarding the website of the Shiite Muslim Hizbollah, the main guerrilla group fighting the Jewish state's occupation of south Lebanon, a Beirut daily said Monday. "Death to Hizbollah. We will kill you all," read an extract of an e-mail sent by an Israeli surfer on Dec. 8, a day after a Hizbollah attack, the As-Safir newspaper reported. The number of e-mails and their tone, mostly threatening, varies according to the military situation in southern Lebanon, the paper said. "Please stop using explosive charges."

## 'Israel violating Palestinian rights'

CAIRO (AFP) — The U.N. rapporteur on human rights Hanu Halinen on Monday said he expected Israel to step up human rights abuses against Palestinians over the next few months.

Halinen was speaking to reporters after talks here with Arab League Secretary General Esmat Abdul Meguid on the situation in the Palestinian territories which he recently toured to prepare his annual report. "Israel is not taking any steps to improve human rights for Palestinians. I have seen for myself Israeli human rights violations," the Finnish diplomat told reporters.

He said he expected human rights violations to increase as Israel and the Palestinian National Authority move closer to the May 4 end of the five-year interim period of self-rule outlined in the Oslo peace accords. "There will be more pressure on the Palestinians," Halinen said.

## U.N. envoy resumes Cyprus shuttle diplomacy

NICOSIA (R) — U.N. Cyprus envoy Ann Hercus on Monday resumed her shuttle diplomacy aimed at resolving the division of the island, boosted by Nicosia's recent decision to cancel a controversial plan to install Russian missiles.

The former New Zealand government minister said only that "the shuttle talks have recommenced" after a 40-minute meeting with

President Glafcos Clerides, the Greek Cypriot leader. She also plans to meet Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denkash later in the week.

For the past three months Hercus has been crisscrossing the U.N.-controlled "green line" dividing the island, trying to come up with ways to lessen tensions between estranged Greek and Turkish Cypriots.

Her talks are being held under a media blackout, but she has reported encouraging signs of progress.

Two weeks ago Clerides abandoned plans to install Russian S-300 anti-aircraft missiles on Cyprus amid concern that their delivery could harm the island's membership talks with the European Union.

Turkey, which invaded northern Cyprus in 1974

after a Greek-inspired coup and has some 30,000 troops on the island, vowed to prevent the missiles from arriving.

Western countries feared the missile deployment could worsen relations between Greece and Turkey, partners in NATO but long-time adversaries over Cyprus.

Nicosia's climbdown came just days after the United Nations urged the

two communities in Cyprus to commit themselves to a process of reducing tension and limiting troop levels and armaments on the island.

"The United States is determined to work very hard to seize the opportunities created by the President's decision," said U.S. Ambassador Kenneth Brill, who had a separate meeting with Clerides on Monday.

## U.S. planes attack Iraqi sites in northern zone

(Continued from page 1)

Kuwait has 15,300 active forces and reserves of nearly 24,000, according to the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies. It also has defence pacts with several Western states, notably Washington.

Sheikh Salem stressed the "importance of taking other measures to boost the defensive capability of Kuwait as dictated by military developments."

Iraq on Sunday described Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, who both allow their territory to be

used as bases for U.S. and British aircraft patrolling the southern "no-fly" zone in Iraq, as "thieves and outlaws."

Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz said Sunday that Baghdad refuses to apologise for its 1990 invasion of Kuwait, and called for the scrapping of a U.N. resolution which demarcated the border in favour of Kuwait.

Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah told Al Rai Al Aam that this demand was "yet another testimony to the fact that

Iraq does not comply with Arab or international treaties."

"The Iraqi regime does not respect the aspirations of its people for a dignified life away from aggressive policies and military adventures," Sheikh Sabah charged.

Kuwait moved some army units to the Iraqi border as a precautionary measure in December, but they were redeployed following the end of the intense four-night U.S.-British bombing campaign against Iraq.

After a call from Iraqi President Saddam Hus-

sein for Arab masses to revolt against their leaders, an Iraqi opposition chief warned last week that Iraq was now preparing to sponsor sabotage attacks in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

### Cohen reiterates warnings to Iraq

Also Monday, U.S. Defence Secretary William Cohen reiterated warnings that Washington was prepared to act militarily if Baghdad threatened Kuwait, other Arab neighbours or its own people.

Cohen, on a visit to Japan, said any move by Iraq to withdraw recognition of Kuwait would be a flagrant violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions, adding: "We are watching it very closely." He refused to say in response to questions whether Washington and London might be preparing for further raids after the month-long Muslim observance of Ramadan ends next week.

"I wouldn't want to speculate on what we might do in the future," he told reporters on Monday.

## JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 477311-19  
PROGRAMME TWO

15:10 Children's French programme  
15:30 Cartoon - Bananas in Pyjamas  
16:00 Doc - Life Choices  
16:30 Ch. 2 links with Ch. 1  
17:10 Doc - Mothers of the Wild  
18:15 Omar Ben Abdul Aziz  
19:00 Le Journal  
19:15 Words of Wisdom  
19:30 News headlines  
19:35 Comedy - Step by Step  
20:00 Journey Across the World of Islam  
20:30 Drama - Tom Jones  
21:10 Doc - You and Your Car  
21:30 UN Cut  
22:00 News in English  
22:30 Lonesome Dove  
23:10 Feature film - "The American Clock"  
00:30 End of TX.

### PRAYER TIMES

04:56 Fajr  
05:11 (Sunrise) Duha  
11:44 Dhuhur  
14:32 Asr  
16:55 Maghreb  
18:17 Isha

### CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church  
Sweifeh, Tel. 5920740  
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 4632785

St. Joseph Church Tel. 4624590  
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 4622366  
Anglican Church Tel. 4624853/4624811

St. Afrem Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 4771751  
Amman International Church Tel. 5865897

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 5688404  
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 5811295

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Tel. 4654932  
St. John the Baptist at De la Salle College Tel. 5661757

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 4637440  
Greek Orthodox Church Tel. 4646138

Church of Presentation, Sweifeh Tel. 5920146  
The United Catholic Church Tel. 4624757

The English-Language Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190  
Evangelical Free Church Tel. 4892679

The Baptist Church Tel. 4628052  
The Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 4771331

The American Orthodox Church Tel. 4775261

### WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Depart-

ment of Meteorology  
Sunny and moderate weather conditions will prevail with winds light and variable to southeasterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Amman 04/18  
Aqaba 08/24  
Deserts 02/19  
Jordan Valley 10/23

Yesterday's high temperatures:  
Amman 17, Aqaba 23 Humidity readings: Amman 33 per cent, Aqaba 25 per cent.

Following are the temperatures expected today in the following areas:

Ajloun 02/13  
Jerash 06/19  
Um Qays 04/18  
Madaba 02/18  
Petra 03/18  
Dead Sea 11/25

### USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN: Dr. Khaldoun Asfour 5323600  
Dr. Amni Hawamdeh 5323550

Dr. Tawfiq Qub'ain 4623029  
Dr. Ghaleb Zawalidh 4126011

AMMAN: Firas Pharmacy 5661912  
Al Salam Pharmacy 4636730  
Mayadah Pharmacy 5537004  
Ruko Al Dawa Pharmacy 5536169

IRBID: Dr. Lutfi Shibli 021241789  
Fou'ad Pharmacy 021275360

ZARQA: Dr. Akram Haddad 09985550  
Palestine Pharmacy 09983562

### EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 4637111  
Civil Defence Department 5661111  
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 4630341  
Civil Defence Emergency 199  
Rescue Police 192, 4621111, 4637777  
Fire Brigade 4617101  
Blood Bank 4775121  
Highway Police 5343402  
Traffic Police 4896390  
Public Security Dept. 4630321  
Hotel Complaints 5605800  
Price Complaints 5661176  
Water & Sewerage Complaints 4897467  
Amman Municipality Complaints 4787111  
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121

Overseas Calls 0132  
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 4623101  
Abdali Tel. Repairs 5661101  
Jordan Television 4773111  
Radio Jordan 4774111  
Water Authority 5680100  
J. Electricity Authority 5815615  
Electric Power Co. 4636381  
RJ Flight Information 44-53200  
Queen Alia Int. Airport 44-53200

### HOSPITALS

AMMAN: The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 5921199  
The Islamic, Abdli 5666131/7  
Husseini Medical Centre 5856856  
Luzmila 4630195  
Khalidi Maternity 4642816  
Alkileh Maternity 4642412  
Jabal Amman Maternity 4642362  
Malhas, J. Amman 4636140  
Palestine, Shmeisani 5607071  
Shmeisani Hospital 5607431  
Jordan Hospital 5607550  
University Hospital 5353444  
Al-Muasher Hospital 5667279  
Al-Ahli, Abdali 5664164/6  
Italian, Al-Muthajreen 4777101/3  
Al-Bashir 4775111/26  
Army, Marka 4891611/5  
Queen Alia Hospital 5157100  
Amal Hospital 5607155  
Al-Amal Cancer Centre 5353000

ZARQA: Zarqa Govt. Hospital 09983323  
Zarqa National Hospital 09909060  
Ibn Sina Hospital 09986731  
Al Hikma Modern Hospital 09990990

IRBID: Princess Basma Hospital 021275555  
Roman Catholic Hospital 021272275  
Ibn Al Nafess Hospital 0217101372, 0217103101  
Rosary Sisters Hospital 0217102831, 0217103011  
Speciality Hospital 0217103100

AQABA: Princess Haya Hospital 032040111

FOR THE TRAVELLER QUEEN ALIA AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (44)53200-5, where it should always be verified. Information on other flights can be supplied on phone 44 (52700). Information on Royal Wings flights can be supplied on phone 4875201-5

### ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights  
07:15 Sanaa (RJ)  
07:30 Damascus (RJ)  
09:50 Tehran, Abu Dhabi (RJ)  
10:05 Muscat, Dubai (RJ)  
10:15 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)  
16:20 Cairo (RJ)  
17:30 Chicago, Amsterdam (RJ)  
21:00 London, Frankfurt (RJ)  
03:00 Jeddah (add) (RJ)

Other Flights  
12:30 Aden (TY)  
14:35 Istanbul (TK)  
18:00 Dubai, Damascus (EK)  
18:40 Beirut (ME)  
18:45 Kiev (6U)  
19:05 Paris (AF)  
20:25 Tel Aviv (LY)  
20:40 Cairo (MS)  
22:25 London, Damascus (BA)  
23:35 Amsterdam (KL)  
23:55 Larnaca (CY)  
00:55 Bucharest (RO)  
02:00 Rome (AZ)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights  
09:30 Aqaba (arriving at QAIA) (RW)  
11:10 Aqaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)  
16:00 Aqaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)

### DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights  
08:25 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)  
11:05 Vienna, Frankfurt (RJ)  
12:00 Berlin, Paris (RJ)  
12:00 Geneva, Madrid (RJ)  
12:15 London (RJ)  
12:30 Cairo (RJ)  
20:00 Beirut, Damascus (RJ)  
20:30 Jeddah (add) (RJ)  
21:00 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)  
22:00 Jeddah (add) (RJ)

Other Flights  
07:10 Frankfurt (LH)  
13:30 Aden (TY)  
15:35 Istanbul (TK)  
19:00 Dubai (EK)  
19:40 Kiev (6U)  
20:00 Beirut (ME)  
21:10 Tel Aviv (LY)  
21:40 Cairo (MS)  
00:35 Amsterdam (KL)  
01:55 Bucharest (RO)  
03:00 Rome (AZ)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights  
07:00 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)  
08:30 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)  
16:30 Tel Aviv (from Marka Airport) (RW)  
20:30 Aqaba (from QAIA) (RW)

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## Queen Noor says 'honour crime' is inconsistent with Islam, Constitution

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor appeared on international television last night to discuss honour crimes in Jordan, and suggested that amendments to the Penal Code were imminent.

Queen Noor, speaking during an interview with the American news network CNN, said that "this type of violence against women is not consistent with Islam or with [the Jordanian] Constitution...this [legal] area is being reviewed and amendments are being proposed to make these laws more consistent with Islamic law and the Constitution."

Queen Noor appeared on the programme along with members of the Police Department's Family Protection Unit, Jordan Times reporter Rana Hussein, Head of the National Institute of Forensic Medicine Mo'men Hadidi and women who currently reside in the Juweidh prison for their own protection. The programme also included interviews with men who have committed honour killings.

Annually 25-30 women are killed to "defend family honour". A press release said Her Majesty several weeks ago agreed to participate in the programme to contribute as "balanced a perspective as possible" on the practice which has drawn fire from human rights organisations world wide.

She added that she has "very strong personal feelings as a Muslim, as a woman, as a wife and as a mother about this form of violence and every form of violence against women."

The Queen praised the efforts of the police department who recently founded a Family Protection Unit adding that the department will soon be a "partner with UNDP and UNIFEM and our Ministry of Social Development in establishing a women's shelter that is geared to counsel, to rehabilitate and to protect women and their children who may be potential victims of these crimes. That is because they are very concerned that these crimes be prevented — that these women be given a chance for protection until the pressures are relieved on their family," she said.

Queen Noor noted that His Majesty King Hussein, in his 1997 opening address to Parliament, condemned violence against women saying that it was clearly inconsistent with Islamic law and the spirit of the Jordanian Constitution, which since 1952 has guaranteed equality before the law for men and women in the country. She added that the King "as a Muslim has made that commitment and as a head of state and head of the larger Jordanian family."

The two articles in the Jordanian Penal Code, which apply to crimes of honour, and now under consideration for revision, are the exonerating law, a section of Article 340 in the Jordanian Penal Code (No. 16, 1960) stating that "he who discovers his wife or one of his female relatives committing adultery and kills, wounds, or injures one of them, is exempted from any penalty," and Article 98 that states, "He who commits a crime in a fit of fury caused by an unrightful and dangerous act on the part of the victim benefits from a reduction of penalty."

Only men can benefit from the reduction of penalty or total exemption; women in the same situation are not entitled to claim exemption from penalty under these laws.

During the interview, Queen Noor reiterated that there is no "gender discrimination" in Jordan's Constitution or in Islamic Sharia, neither of which "distinguish between men and women, male and female, who have committed crimes."

According to Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh, in view of the changes that have taken place in Jordan's "social and economic environment and the development witnessed in humanitarian concepts and social relations," the Ministry of Justice is preparing a new, modern Penal Code draft, which would replace Law No. 16 for the year 1960. The articles pertaining to "crimes of honour" are also being reviewed as part of the government's comprehensive legal reforms.

When the draft Penal code and its amendments are ready, they will be presented to parliament.

In 1997, officials said that at least 25 women were killed in the name of honour. Although officials have not released statistics for 1998, they expect the number of women killed for reasons of "honour" to exceed 20. As of Jan. 4, more than 40 women were retained in government correctional facilities in "protective custody."

In November 1998, the United Nations' Commission on Human Rights condemned the practice of honour killings.

## Labour Ministry recommends minimum wage to combat poverty, unemployment

By Mohammad Ben Hussein

AMMAN — The Ministry of Labour Monday said it recommended that the Cabinet set a minimum wage to help combat unemployment, said Saleh Tarawneh, secretary general of the ministry.

However, Fathallah Emrani, vice president of the Jordan Trade Unions, said he "did not hear of such a thing at all."

According to the labour law, the minister of labour is authorised to recommend that the Cabinet form a special committee to examine the possibility of setting a minimum wage in accordance with living standards and cost of living. The committee is usually comprised of representatives from the Chamber of Industry and Trade, which represents employers, the trade and labour unions, which represent labourers and the labour ministry.

Many labour union leaders and economists believe that setting a minimum wage is the right way to solve unemployment, officially estimated at 14 per cent, and independently at 27 per cent.

The government, working under directions from His Majesty King Hussein, is currently implementing several measures to fight unemployment by cracking down on illegal workers and activating some articles of the Labour Law.

Last week, Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh, head of the National Task Force on Unemployment, gave illegal workers a three-month grace period to rectify their legal status. Any foreign labourer caught in violation of the Labour Law will immediately be deported at the expense of his employers.

According to Labour Ministry figures, around 121,000 foreign workers have rectified their legal status since the government initiated the crackdown in September.

It is estimated that there are one million foreign workers currently residing and working in the Kingdom.

But others believe it to be very difficult to set a minimum wage due to the economic recession currently paralysing Jordan's industrial sector.

The government, its hands tied by spending restrictions, has to deal with an economy growing much slower than the annual 3.6 per cent population growth. The gap has translated into declining living standards, higher unemployment and increased poverty.

The government, trying to trim the bloated public sector — about half of the million-strong workforce is employed by the state — is seeking to attract foreign investment to find more local jobs.

But with the peace process in limbo, the West

Bank and Iraq markets virtually closed off to Jordanians goods and official waffling on the privatisation of public enterprises, economic growth forecast appears difficult.

Previous governments, especially that of the former Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, however, often attributed the failure of Jordanians to engage in low-paid and menial jobs such as garbage collecting, sanitary operations and domestic help to a social phenomenon that has become known as the "culture of shame," not to minimum wage.

But many socialists and economists insist that the absence of minimum wage and job incentives such as social security and health insurance has forced many to shun these professions, saying the cost of going to work outweighs the cost of staying home.

AMMAN — The staff of the privately-run Al Sharq Hospital has concluded an open-ended strike after the management paid salaries now three months overdue, a hospital official said Monday.

The staff resumed work after an agreement was reached between the Union of Health Services and the former management of the hospital which bowed to workers' demands by paying their salaries, said Ahmad Abu Silah, head of the Union of Health Services.

Hospital staff confirmed having received their salaries. However, many said they are planning to resign as soon as they obtain their salaries.

The hospital's staff of 60, including doctors, nurses, lab technicians and others earlier last week refused to admit any new patients to the 40-bed facility for four days and would only treat emergency cases, said Sana' Hattar, a nurse.

Troubles began earlier last year when the hospital's former management began facing financial problems which culminated in the sale of the hospital to another company, said Ala' Mohammad, another nurse. The two managements, however, could not agree on several financial points, which delayed the registration of the contract at the Amman Chamber of Industry. The debacle in turn delayed the payment of salaries.

"We decided to hold an open-ended strike until the hospital gave us our salaries," said Mohammad.

"[The management] called the police to threaten us and force us to rescind our decision, but when the police found it to be a peaceful strike, they left us alone," he added.

Mohammad and other hospital staff have said that they intend to continue their strike, regardless of the threats, until they are paid. Last week, nurses complained that the management was again delaying payment in spite of an announcement that it was prepared to pay salaries.

"The hospital's management placed an official document on the hospital's bulletin board announcing that the long over-due salaries would be paid on Jan. 7," said Mohammad. But when the staff went to collect the money, he says, they were told there was still some delay and the salaries will be paid next week.

"We have families to support. The 'Eid [Al Fitr holiday] is coming and it entails many expenses," he complained.

## Nurses end strike at Al Sharq Hospital

By Mohammad Ben Hussein

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AMMAN — Lebanon said Monday that it had no problem with Jordanian produce shipped in polystyrene boxes after seven Jordanian packaging factories suspended production in protest of an earlier Lebanese decision not to allow the entry of produce shipped in polystyrene, an official said.

The seven Jordanian factories sent a letter to Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh protesting a statement made by an official, warning Jordanian agricultural producers not to export produce to Lebanon in polystyrene packages because Lebanon would send them back.

The official was referring to articles included in the agricultural agreement signed between Jordan and Lebanon in 1998.

However, the seven factories said they contacted Lebanese authorities through the Lebanese embassy in Amman, and received the reply that the agreement between the two countries does not specify the type of packaging in which the produce must be sent.

"Lebanese officials told us they have never discussed this issue with their Jordanian counterparts," said the letter.

"Lebanon has agreed that Jordanian exporters can send their produce in any type of package they find suitable," said Salem Lawzi, head of the Jordan Agricultural Exports Organisation.

According to Lawzi, the agreement does not define the type of packing in which the produce must be sent, but the agreement gives both countries, Lebanon and Jordan, the right to request any type of shipment they find suitable for their markets.

"That is what Lebanon has done," Lawzi told the Jordan Times.

"Lebanon said it would accept any kind of package provided it is clean, new and meets the qualification standards agreed upon between the two countries," said Lawzi.

The letter added that Syria is currently exporting agricultural produce to Lebanon in polystyrene boxes while fruits and vegetables are being imported to Jordan from Lebanon in polystyrene packages.

The manufacturers accused the Jordan Agricultural Exports Organisation of collusion to benefit certain companies producing different types of packing devices.

The seven factories, mostly located in the Jordan Valley, Jordan's "food basket," employ around 1,000 people and have a combined total investment of around JD20 million.

Since the 1990-91 Gulf War, when Jordan lost most of its Gulf market for "sympathising with Iraq," Lebanon has become Jordan's prime partner in agricultural industry. Jordan imports 20,000 tonnes of farm produce from Lebanon a year and exports 50,000 tonnes — around 70 per cent of Jordan's total agricultural exports.

Jordan normally exports to Lebanon produce grown in winter in the Jordan Valley. The Kingdom imports cherries, potatoes and apples.

AMMAN (J.T.) — Karak Mayor Ahmad Mahadin Monday reviewed preparations for a \$4.6 million tourism project with a delegation from the Japanese International Cooperation Agency.

Mahadin said the Japanese-funded project includes the renovation and maintenance of parts of the Karak Castle, the creation of audio-visual systems, the construction of a bridge to link the castle's current gate with the original gate and the renovation of the main square.

A World Bank tender was floated for the work.

He added that the plan, which will maintain the infrastructure of Karak's main street, also includes providing management and marketing training courses for citizens working in the tourism sector.

According to Mahadin, Japan will provide for 75 per cent of the project cost, and Jordan will supply the balance.

The mayor, the delegation, representatives of the Karak City Council and other officials from the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities toured the area.

Japan is an important donor to Middle East countries, and especially to Jordan and the Palestinian National Authority.

Jordan is the largest recipient of Japan's official development assistance loans per capita among developing countries worldwide.

On Saturday, Japanese Foreign Minister Masahiko Kōmura and Planning Minister Nabil Amman signed a memorandum of understanding by which Japan will extend a \$63 million soft loan to the Kingdom for a tourism development project, expected to increase foreign currency earnings, create jobs and stimulate domestic and regional economies. Kōmura was in Jordan as part of a tour of the Middle East.

In addition to the upcoming extension of the soft loan in tourism, Tokyo's contribution to the Kingdom's economic development totalled \$82 million in 1998.

AMMAN (J.T.) — Studies, designs and preparation of tender documents for infrastructure projects in the Palestinian refugee camps and underdeveloped areas are under way, said Ibrahim Badran, head of the Palestinian Affairs Department Monday.

The designs will feature plans for roads, water sewage and supply networks as well as rain water drainage systems in each of the Kingdom's 13 refugee camps, Badran said.

He said the department has reached agreement with the Jordan Electric Power Company to improve the camps' power network and agreements with the concerned government departments to build retaining walls.

Badran, whose department is concerned with services in the refugee camps, pointed out that the department embarked on preliminary studies in conjunction with local consultancy firms in July 1998 to improve infrastructure services in nine of the camps as a first stage. Prince Hassan Camp, Talibieh, Madaba, Zarga, Sukhneh, Bakaa, Jerash, Azmi Mufti and Irbid camps will be first to benefit, Badran said.

According to Badran, these studies and designs were completed at a cost of JD249,048.

The improvement of infrastructure services in the underdeveloped areas and the refugee camps is provided for in the estimated JD-430 million government-sponsored plan, expected to be implemented over several years.

In this year's state budget, the government earmarked JD32 million for these projects.

Badran said a number of donor organisations are involved in establishing health care centres in the Baqaa and Jerash refugee camps. Developers have already prepared engineering studies in these camps, and tender documents have been drafted, Badran said.

Badran said that the Baqaa centre will cost JD552,000 and the Jerash camp centre will cost JD441,000.

## Packaging factories reassured by Lebanese statement accepting polystyrene packaging for produce

By Mohammad Ben Hussein

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AMMAN (J.T.) — The Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) Monday issued a teachers guide for the Mujib Nature Reserve as part of effort to include environmental issues in education and promote public awareness among students.

A society statement said the book seeks to provide clear and comprehensive information about the reserve's environment and wildlife species, as well as familiarise students with conservation ideas, promote public awareness among them and activate their participation in environmental protection.

According to the statement, the publication will help teachers guide students to get rid of non-environmentally-friendly habits, especially in nature reserves that house endangered animals of local and regional importance.

The edition, funded by the Dutch Embassy, is the first of a series of publications to be issued about the Kingdom's six nature reserves: Shoumari, Azraq, Mujib, Zoubia, Dana and Wadi Rum.

Last year, 20 endangered Nubian ibex bred in captivity were released into the 215-square-kilometre Mujib Nature Reserve to supplement the country's small natural population.

Wadi Mujib is the main part of the river system flowing through the reserve, established in 1986.

Mujib, which lies along the Great Rift Valley linking Africa with Asia and forms a safe haven for migratory birds, is home to at least 10 globally-threatened animal and plant species.

According to the society, Mujib is one of the cleanest and least disturbed river systems left in Jordan. It is part of the water catchment for the Dead Sea and always has flowing water, even in the summer. Water flows out of the valley to the Dead Sea through a narrow sandstone gorge lined with palm trees and lush vegetation.

Ending a controversy over a proposed diversion dam on the Mujib River, last October, the Jordan Valley Authority and the

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PRINCE ABDULLAH AND PRINCESS RANIA ATTEND IFTAR BANQUET: Their Royal Highnesses Prince Abdullah and Princess Rania Monday attend an iftar banquet hosted by the Greater Amman Municipality. The municipality hosted the iftar at Jebel Nasser for children of the Jordan River Society on the occasion of His Majesty King Hussein's recovery. Prince Abdullah and Princess Rania distributed gifts and clothes to the children. The municipality also offered the society two computers, one television, several heaters and other gifts. The banquet was attended by Amman Mayor Nidal Hadid and his wife (Petra Photo).

## Japanese agency funds \$4.6 million renovation, restoration of Karak Castle

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The mayor, the delegation, representatives of the Karak City Council and other officials from the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities toured the area.

Japan is an important donor to Middle East countries, and especially to Jordan and the Palestinian National Authority.

Jordan is the largest recipient of Japan's official development assistance loans per capita among developing countries worldwide.

On Saturday, Japanese Foreign Minister Masahiko Kōmura and Planning Minister Nabil Amman signed a memorandum of understanding by which Japan will extend a \$63 million soft loan to the Kingdom for a tourism development project, expected to increase foreign currency earnings, create jobs and stimulate domestic and regional economies. Kōmura was in Jordan as part of a tour of the Middle East.

In addition to the upcoming extension of the soft loan in tourism, Tokyo's contribution to the Kingdom's economic development totalled \$82 million in 1998.

## Infrastructure projects under way in refugee camps

AMMAN (J.T.) — Studies, designs and preparation of tender documents for infrastructure projects in the Palestinian refugee camps and underdeveloped areas are under way, said Ibrahim Badran, head of the Palestinian Affairs Department Monday.

The designs will feature plans for roads, water sewage and supply networks as well as rain water drainage systems in each of the Kingdom's 13 refugee camps, Badran said.

He said the department has reached agreement with the Jordan Electric Power Company to improve the camps' power network and agreements with the concerned government departments to build retaining walls.

Badran, whose department is concerned with services in the refugee camps, pointed out that the department embarked on preliminary studies in conjunction with local consultancy firms in July 1998 to improve infrastructure services in nine of the camps as a first stage. Prince Hassan Camp, Talibieh, Madaba, Zarga, Sukhneh, Bakaa, Jerash, Azmi Mufti and Irbid camps will be first to benefit, Badran said.

According to Badran, these studies and designs were completed at a cost of JD249,048.

The improvement of infrastructure services in the underdeveloped areas and the refugee camps is provided for in the estimated JD-430 million government-sponsored plan, expected to be implemented over several years.

In this year's state budget, the government earmarked JD32 million for these projects.

Badran said a number of donor organisations are involved in establishing health care centres in the Baqaa and Jerash refugee camps. Developers have already prepared engineering studies in these camps, and tender documents have been drafted, Badran said.

Badran said that the Baqaa centre will cost JD552,000 and the Jerash camp centre will cost JD441,000.

## What's Going On

### FILM

"Legends of the Fall" at Books@Café, Jabal Amman at 8:30 p.m. (Tel. 4650457).

### POETRY RECITAL

\*Recital of popular poetry (in slang Arabic) by the Abu Muqr Group and Al Jalmawi Group at the City Hall, Greater Amman Municipality, Ras Al 'Ain at 7:30 p.m.

### EXHIBITIONS

\*Exhibition of ceramics, sculpture, and abstract (plastic) art by Jordanian, Iraqi, Syrian, Lebanese, and Sudanese artists at Hammourabi Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5536098), until Jan. 25.  
\*Exhibition of Nabataean silver jewellery at the Jordan Design and Trade Centre, off Wadi Saqra Street, until Jan. 15 (Tel. 5699141/2).  
\*The Warm Winter — works by several artists at Orfali Art Gallery, Um Uthaina (Tel. 5526932), until Feb. 1 (Tel. 5699141/2).  
\*The Tenth Anniversary Exhibition of Contemporary Arab Artists at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh (Tel. 4643251/2), until Jan. 28.



## Obasanjo's party wins Nigerian state elections

LAGOS (AFP) — The centre-left Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) of presidential hopeful Olusegun Obasanjo confirmed its position as Nigeria's leading political party in state elections, final results showed Monday.

The PDP, which won sweeping victories in local elections held last December, took 20 state governorships Saturday against nine for the centre-right All Peoples Party (APP) and six for the radical Alliance for Democracy (AD).

The results showed some small inroads being made by the APP into the PDP's strongholds in the north, however, while the AD held on to its heartland of the Yoruba southwest.

Voting took place in 35 of Nigeria's 36 states but was deferred in Bayelsa state in the south because of recent clashes between security agents and locals demanding a greater share of oil wealth.

A remarkable AD success was in the economic capital, Lagos, where former senator and recently returned political exile Bola Tinubu won the governorship in a remarkable turnaround in political fortunes.

Among other notable winners were Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, brother of Shehu Musa Yar'Adua, the late number two to former military ruler and now presidential candidate Obasanjo.

Yar'Adua won in Katsina for the PDP.

The elections, which were marked by smooth organisation and largely peaceful voting across the country, were the second in a series planned to lead Africa's country back to civilian rule this year.

Nigeria's military ruler General Abdulsalam Abubakar has promised to hand over to an elected president on May 29.

After the local and now

state elections, legislative elections are due on Feb. 20 and presidential polls on Feb. 27.

The favoured candidate in the presidential polls is Obasanjo, the general who in 1979 turned over power to an elected civilian president after he had been military ruler for about three years. He is seeking the nomination of the PDP.

Observers in Lagos Monday said the PDP's strong showing Saturday made its candidate the most likely bet to win the presidency in February and would heat up the contest for the PDP nomination.

The party, and its rivals, the APP and AD, all have to hold congresses to choose their candidates and the dates for the gatherings are expected to emerge in coming days.

The international community has meanwhile applauded the so-far smooth transition to civilian rule in Nigeria.

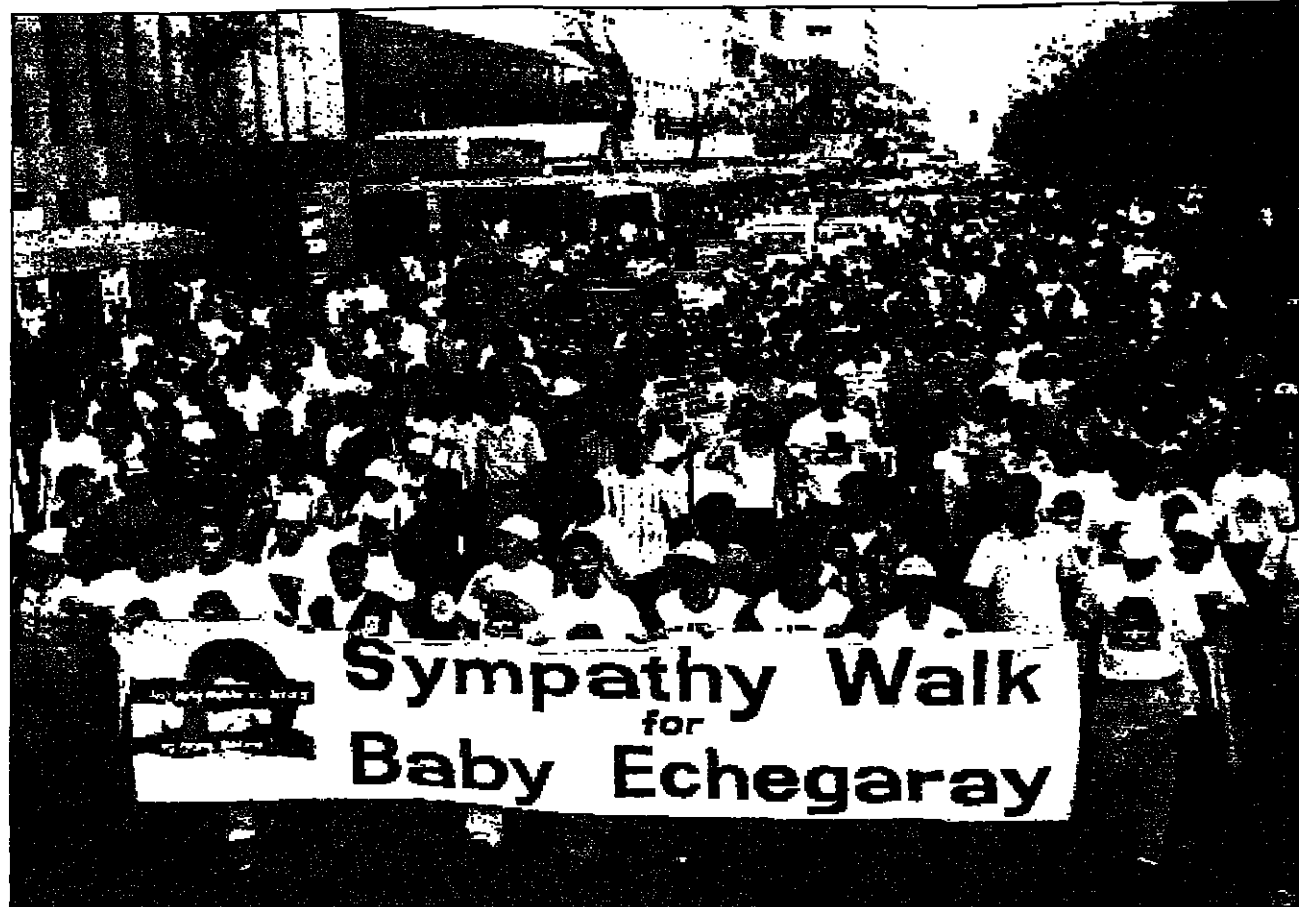
Commonwealth Secretary-General Emeka Anyaoku Monday said Saturday's elections were "another important step."

"Nigeria is well on course in the programme of transition to democracy and civilian rule," he said.

Anyaoku said Botswana former president Ketumile Masire would lead a high-level Commonwealth mission to Nigeria next month to monitor the legislative and presidential elections.

Since independence in 1960, the military, headed since June by Abubakar, have dominated Africa's most populous country, home to 108 million people.

The elections are seen by many as the last chance for a return to civilian rule in a united Nigeria. If these polls were to fail many Nigerians might give up on the troubled country as a nation state, many observers believe.



Thousands of pro-death penalty supporters march at the financial district in Makati to show support for the 15-year-old rape victim identified as 'Baby' Echegaray. The demonstrators demanded execution for Leo Echegaray who was convicted of raping her in 1994 when she was 11. Echegaray was given a reprieve by the Philippine Supreme Court hours before he was scheduled to be executed on Jan. 4 (Reuters photo)

## Manila rape victim in march for attacker's death

MANILA (R) — A Filipina schoolgirl raped by her step-father marched through hundreds of supporters through Manila's financial centre Monday to campaign for his execution, and the supreme court said it would rule on the man's fate next week.

Employees from high-rise buildings in the Makati business district threw confetti as the girl, her face veiled to hide her identity, and her supporters marched in the afternoon heat to demand death for the child rapist whose execution was blocked.

Identified only as "Baby", the girl was 10 years old when she was raped several times by her step-father, house painter Leo Echegaray, in 1994.

First Lady Loi Estrada and Vice-President Gloria Macapagal joined the

march, linking arms with the rape victim as her supporters moved through Makati bearing "Death for Echegaray" signs.

Echegaray, 38, was to have been put to death by lethal injection last week in what should have been the country's first execution in decades but the supreme court ordered a stay of execution.

The 15-member court, meeting behind closed doors Monday, considered a government plea to allow the execution and said it would meet again on Jan. 19 to deliver a ruling.

It ordered Echegaray's lawyers to submit their response to the government petition by January 14, court officials said.

Echegaray's reprieve raised a storm of protest across the country, where previous surveys had

shown many Filipinos favoured the death penalty to curb a resurgence of crime.

Pro-death penalty activists have held rallies in major cities and President Estrada has sharply criticised the supreme court.

Last Monday, the court issued a temporary restraining order three hours before Echegaray was to be put to death, saying the execution had to be stayed pending the outcome of fresh attempts in congress to overturn the law authorising capital punishment.

A government petition contended that the supreme court ruling had invaded a function of the executive and ignored the rights of the victim.

It also said the stay could create a dangerous precedent since any law could at some time be repealed or

altered. Congressman Roilo Golez boosted the government case by submitting to the court Monday a resolution signed by 122 of the House of Representatives' 220 members saying the House had no intention of reconsidering the death penalty.

"This is an overwhelming majority," Golez told reporters.

"There is no way the law will be repealed by this congress. The house is sending this message because the supreme court is looking for signals."

The Philippines abolished the death penalty in 1987 but restored it in 1994 because of a spurt in violent crime. No one has been executed since 1976 although there are more than 850 people on death row.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### EU to have early warning system for illegal immigration

COLOMBO (AP) — The European Union will monitor conflict zones such as Sri Lanka in order to provide early warnings to its members about possible illegal immigration as people flee violence, a German ambassador said Monday. "The idea came from constant threats from conflict areas in Europe and our neighbourhood, but gradually the concept will be introduced in all the conflict zones of the world, including Sri Lanka," Helmut van Edigheim reporters. His country is the current president of the Union. Under the proposed system, EU officials will monitor the situation in conflict areas and will assess whether there is likely to be an exodus of refugees. Member nations would be alerted before the migration actually starts. Edigheim said asylum would still be available to those deemed legal refugees, but it will also be careful in not making us vulnerable situation of influx." He did not specify what countries might take to keep out immigrants. He said rules regarding repatriation of illegal immigrants would be defined soon, but did not elaborate. In Sri Lanka, where a 16-year-old Tamil war pits ethnic Tamil Tiger separatists against the government, large number of minority Tamils have immigrated to various countries in Europe, Australia, India and the United States. No reliable figure is available on Tamil migration, but police around the world often detect Tamil would-be-migrants with incomplete documents. Tamils make up 3.3 million out of Sri Lanka population of 18.5 million people. Militants among Sri Lanka's Tamils say they can only prosper away from domination by the Sinhalese majority of this island nation off India's southern coast. The Sri Lankan government says Tamils have equal rights and opportunities.

### Eleven Indonesian soldiers arrested after civilians beaten to death

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — Military police Monday arrested 11 soldiers accused of beating and torturing four civilians to death while in custody, a senior army officer said. Troops raided a village in Indonesia's westernmost province of Aceh Saturday and arrested dozens of residents suspected of supporting Islamic separatists. The civilians were later locked up in building in the town of Lhokseumawe where they were attacked by troops, human rights activists said. In addition to the four dead, 23 civilians were seriously injured. Lhokseumawe military commander Col. Johnny Wahab said 11 soldiers had been arrested and more might be questioned. "We have to uphold the law," said Wahab. Aceh, 1,750 kilometres northwest of Jakarta, is one of three Indonesian provinces where small groups of rebels are fighting for independence. The Acehnese rebels have been fighting for decades for an Islamic state in the strongly Muslim region. Indonesia's military has long been accused of committing widespread human rights abuses. Its commanders have promised to improve its record following the resignation last May of autocratic President Suharto who used the military to suppress dissent during his 32-year rule. Suharto resigned after protests and riots erupted during the worst economic crisis in decades.

### 'China's Great Wall built 300 years earlier than believed'

BEIJING (AFP) — Chinese experts said Monday the Great Wall was built 2,500 years ago, 300 years before China's first emperor Qin Shihuang was believed to have initiated its construction to keep out marauding barbarians. "The earliest part of the Great Wall has been found in the Shandong Province, which roughly parallels the ancient Qi Kingdom," the official Xinhua news agency quoted Zhang Guangming, deputy chief of the cultural relics bureau of Zibo city in Shandong, as saying. The Qi Great Wall started at a small village in Changqing county and ran to the sea near Qingdao for a total length of 620 kilometres, Zhang said. He said historical records showed the now-dilapidated wall had 12 passes, nine gates, 50 castles and barracks and 12 beacon towers. The winding wall comprised the southern fortifications of this strong kingdom," Zhang said. The Kingdom of Qi at that time contended with others for hegemony and its king Huangong was one of the five most powerful dukes during the spring and autumn period (770 BC-476 BC). "It was extremely difficult for the ancient people to build such giant military defences," Zhang said, adding that labourers spent 170 years to build the wall. Archaeologists recently unearthed cultural ruins and relics near the Shandong section of the Great Wall. The new finds are expected to aid in the study on Qi Culture. More than 20 emperors ordered the building or renovation of the wall, which eventually gained a length of more than 5,000 kilometres.

### British Marquess, aristocrat and junkie, dead at 44

LONDON (AFP) — The Marquess of Bristol, born into one of Britain's richest families but whose drug addiction cost him a fortune and his freedom, died aged 44, his agent said. He was found Sunday, apparently dying in his sleep at his home in Suffolk, eastern England. He had been suffering from a flu-type bug. "He was perfectly well over Christmas and was discussing going to the Bahamas for a couple of weeks," his agent Simon Pott said. The Marquess was jailed twice for possession of drugs. A trial in 1993 was told that his addiction had cost his family around £7 million (\$11.7 million, 10 million euros) in 10 years. His half-brother and heir, Lord Frederick Hervey, 19, who is studying at Edinburgh University, becomes the 8th Marquess of Bristol. The former Marquess, who once estimated his personal wealth at £30 million, led a colourful life. As well as the 4,000-acre-lkworth estate, he also inherited £4 million, a 57,000-acre Australian sheep station and four Louisiana oil wells. But he gave up his lease on Lkworth House last year, claiming it was too expensive to maintain, and earlier sold many of his belongings. He was arrested in 1988 and later served nine months in prison after £1,000 worth of cocaine was found aboard his private helicopter. In December 1993, he was jailed for 10 months for possession of heroin and cocaine. Police found drugs hidden among the Old Masters and Chippendale furniture at Lkworth House during a raid in October 1991. After stints in rehabilitation, he emerged in 1996 to press reports that he was dying of AIDS.

## Prosecution case against Malaysia's Anwar nears close

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP) — The prosecution case in the trial of ousted deputy premier Anwar Ibrahim is nearing a close here with both sides gearing up to argue whether the controversial hearing should proceed or be dismissed.

As the trial entered its 11th week Monday, Anwar's lawyers were wrapping up their cross-examination of the final prosecution witness, chemist Lim Kong Boon. He is due to step down from the witness box this week after which both sides are to summarise their evidence on the case.

If presiding judge Justice Augustine Paul rules there is a case against Anwar, the defence will then start presenting its own witnesses.

Legal sources said the

defence would strive to "punch holes into the prosecution case" based on contradictory testimony by key witnesses and to prove there was a conspiracy against Anwar.

Anwar, 51, is on trial on four charges of corruption related to allegations he used his position to cover up claims of sexual misconduct, carrying a penalty of up to 14 years in jail.

He was sacked on Sept. 2 after falling out of favour with Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad and arrested 18 days later after leading massive protests against his former mentor.

He also faces a fifth corruption charge and five charges of sodomy, with a maximum penalty of 20 years imprisonment plus whipping, all of

which he has dismissed as part of a conspiracy by his political enemies.

Anwar's case drew world condemnation when he appeared in court with a black eye and neck brace, alleging police assaulted him under custody.

His cause was further boosted when official findings held police responsible for his beatings, leading Malaysia's police chief Rahim Noor to resign Friday.

Anwar also held Mahathir, in his capacity as home minister, responsible for his beating and sought damages from the leader.

But in a swift move to reassert control amid the political storm, Mahathir announced a cabinet revamp

which put loyalists in key posts and dodged potential challenge by deferring party elections.

Public interest in Anwar's corruption trial, which started on Nov. 2, appeared to wane after the case proceeded at a glacial pace.

But in an unexpected turn of events, Zairur Zakaria — one of Anwar's nine lawyers — was sentenced to three months in jail on November 30 for contempt of court for refusing to apologise for seeking to remove two prosecutors from the trial, alleging they tried to falsely implicate Anwar in various sex offences.

The scandal was further fuelled when Anwar's former driver Azizah Abu Bakar, and Umni Hafid Ali, the sister of Anwar's then private secretary

were called to the stand.

The prosecution cases rests largely on a letter to Mahathir in 1997 in which Umni alleged that Anwar was a homosexual and that her brother's wife had an affair with Anwar.

Azizan stunned the court when he gave lurid details of his alleged relationship with Anwar, saying he was sodomised by both Anwar and the politician's adopted brother in 1992.

The trial also heard that Umni had been disowned by her father over the scandal, unveiling a dramatic family feud in court, but she has denied being "madly in love" with Anwar.

The defence later revealed it had copies of a secret record-

ing of an alleged conversation between Umni and a lawmaker last June, which exposed a conspiracy to topple Anwar but the judge ruled out the evidence.

In another bizarre twist, prosecutors hauled a semen-stained mattress into the courtroom, seized by police as part of their probe into allegations that Anwar had sex with the wife of an aide and fathered her child. Police witnesses said blood tests cleared Anwar of the charge.

A chemist however, testified he found semen stains of Anwar and body fluid of the wife of the former leader's aide on the mattress but later acknowledged that the stains could have been planted.

## Impeachment trial gets started with concerns about length, witnesses

WASHINGTON (AP) — As the Senate moves ahead this week with President Bill Clinton's impeachment trial, some Republicans are demanding to hear from witnesses while Democrats warn that testimony could spin the proceedings out of control.

The White House had until noon EST (1700 GMT) Monday to respond to the Senate summons and declare it will present a defence for two articles of impeachment against the president.

Both the House prosecutors and White House lawyers had until the end of the day to present motions. The White House likely was to seek a motion to dismiss the case.

A vote on that would not come until after the prosecutors and the White House present their cases to the jury of 100 senators and take questions from the senators. That

phase begins Thursday with House arguments and could last several weeks.

The decision to call witnesses also will follow the initial presentations. Republicans and Democrats are divided on the need or wisdom of that step.

"It seems to me it is hard to have a trial without witnesses," Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch, a Utah Republican, said Sunday on ABC television's "This Week."

He said this was "probably the most important trial of this century, and it calls for that type of consideration." But Sen. Carl Levin, a Michigan Democrat, warned that "you could get into a quagmire, which would be very lurid, which would not be a dignified ending to this sad chapter and would not add enough evidentiary value to outweigh

the negatives."

The 13 House "managers", or prosecutors, say they must have witnesses to properly present their case alleging that Clinton committed perjury and obstruction of justice in trying to cover up his affair with former White House intern Monica Lewinsky.

Rep. Asa Hutchinson, an Arkansas Republican, said on CBS' "Face the Nation" that they could limit the witnesses to about six. Among them, he named Ms. Lewinsky, the president's secretary, Betty Currie, and Clinton friend Vernon Jordan, who helped Ms. Lewinsky get a job.

"We do not want to get into graphic details. We want to talk about the obstruction of justice," Hutchinson said. White House spokesman Jim Kennedy said the hope is that after the initial phase of the trial, senators will realise

the case does not warrant removing the president from office and vote to dismiss the charges.

Kennedy said Clinton plans to deliver his State of the Union policy address to Congress as scheduled Jan. 19, even though the trial will be under way. "We have no intention of being diverted from that," he said.

Sen. Christopher Dodd, a Connecticut Democrat, said on CNN's "Late Edition" that if Republicans, in a partisan vote, force the acceptance of witnesses the bipartisan spirit that brought senators together on a format for the trial "could degenerate very quickly."

"We know the facts," Senate Democratic leader Tom Daschle said on CBS. "I think we are ready now to present the evidence and make a decision." Most

Democrats say they prefer that Clinton stay in office but that Congress approve a strong resolution censuring him for his actions in the Lewinsky matter.

Sen. Dianne Feinstein, a California Democrat, told NBC she is working on a censure motion, saying that if Clinton is not removed from office, "there should be something before the body." Democrats have 45 seats in the Senate, more than enough to defeat a vote to remove Clinton from office, which requires a two-thirds majority. A motion to dismiss would need 51 votes.

From Thursday, the House of Representatives will have 24 hours, probably over three days, to present its case as to why Clinton should be convicted.

Rep. Bill McCollum, a Florida Republican, said Rep.

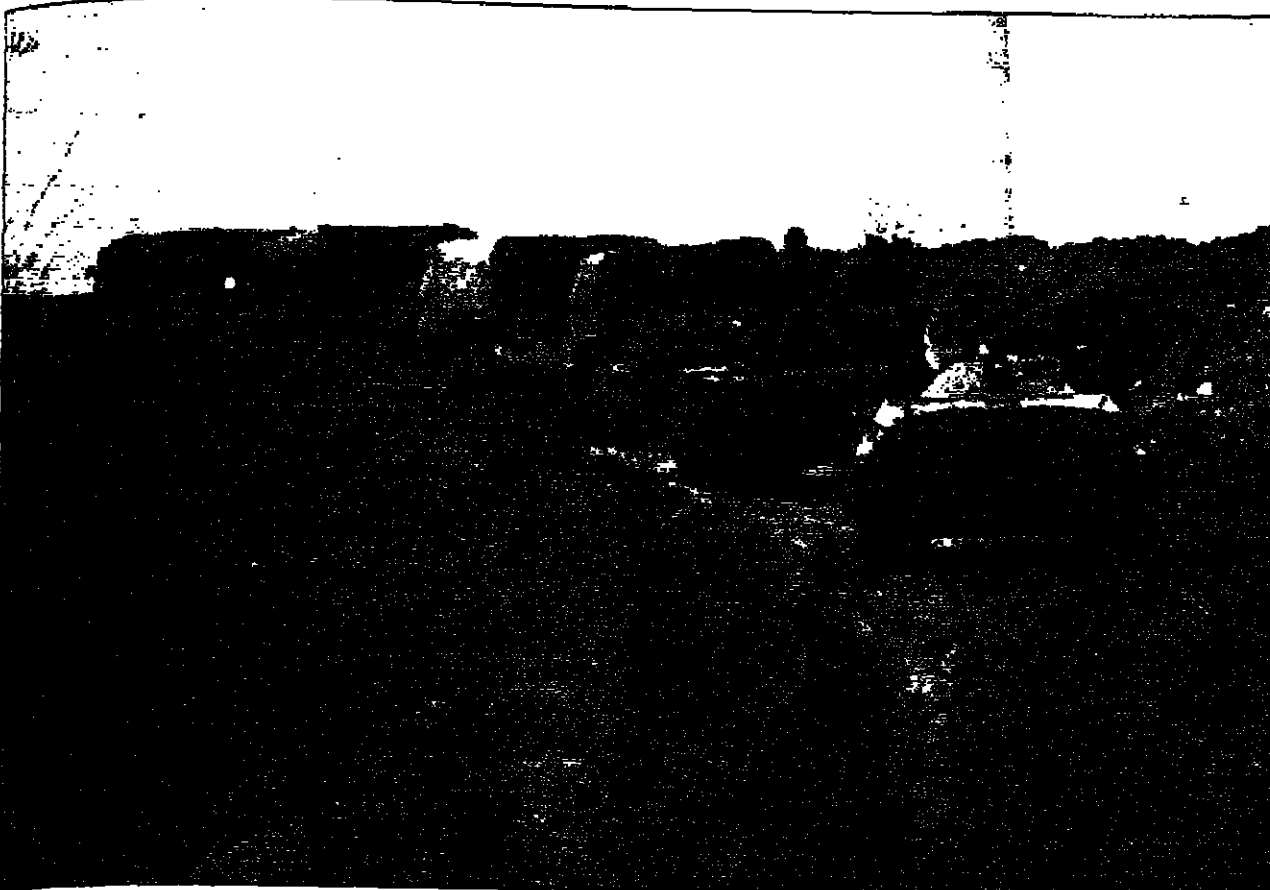
James Sensenbrenner of Wisconsin would make opening statements after initial remarks by Judiciary Committee Chairman Henry Hyde of Illinois. McCollum said "I seriously doubt" the House will need the full 24 hours to make its case.

Sensenbrenner, Hutchinson, McCollum and Reps. James Rogan of California and Ed Bryant of Tennessee would present the evidence and Rep. Charles Canady of Florida, and others would explain how the charges met the standards for impeachable offences, congressional sources said.

The White House will then have 24 hours for its arguments and up to 16 hours will be devoted to questions from senators. After that, the Senate would take up the motion to dismiss, and, if that fails, vote on motions to present witnesses.

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A Yugoslav army convoy heads to positions near Tabe village in Podujevo area, 30 km north of Pristina, the regional capital of Kosovo. Violence escalated in Kosovo as the Yugoslav army pounded ethnic Albanian strongholds after the guerrilla Kosovo Liberation Army captured eight Yugoslav Army soldiers (Reuters photo)

## Kosovo rebels under pressure to free army hostages

PRISTINA, Yugoslavia (AFP) — International monitors kept up contacts with Kosovo rebels Monday in a bid to free eight Yugoslav Army soldiers.

"Talks are still ongoing," said Heinz Nitsch, spokesman for the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)'s Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM).

The separatist Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) said in a statement Sunday they would release the soldiers in return for the liberation of ethnic Albanians held prisoners by the Serbian authorities.

The soldiers "will be released

when an agreement has been concluded with American and European mediators on the exchange of prisoners of war, in line with international conventions," the statement said.

The eight soldiers were seized Friday near Stari Trg, 12 kilometres north of Kosovska Mitrovica.

KVM observers — put in place to monitor a U.S.-brokered ceasefire that began in mid-October — visited the men Saturday and Sunday and reported they were in good health.

Meanwhile, diplomatic pressure for the soldiers' release has

been mounting.

In Brussels, NATO Secretary-general Javier Solana Sunday demanded "the immediate release" of the soldiers and called on both sides in Kosovo to initiate a "political process" to resolve the Kosovo crisis.

OSCE chairman Knut Vollebæk, who arrived in Belgrade on Sunday, was due to hold talks with Yugoslav political leaders on Monday.

Vollebæk is on a five-day Balkan mission focusing on the Kosovo crisis.

More than 1,000 people, mostly ethnic Albanians, have

been killed since February when fighting erupted in the Yugoslav province between the KLA and Serbian security forces.

That violence subsided into a fragile truce in October under a U.S.-brokered accord, but the ceasefire has been repeatedly tested by attacks on civilians and Serbian police.

The KLA is the main guerrilla force fighting for the independence of Kosovo, whose population is 90 per cent ethnic Albanian. The province is also regarded by Serbs as the cradle of their Orthodox religion and culture.

## Pilot of crashed Thai jet could not see runway

BANGKOK (AFP) — The pilot of a Thai Airways jet which crashed last month killing 101 people was blinded by a storm during two aborted landing attempts, according to a leaked transcript Monday.

The transcript, of the black box voice recorder, appeared to indicate that on his first two landing attempts the pilot could not see the runway. The transcript also reported:

"After two aborted approaches the pilot was asked by an air traffic controller: 'Please confirm whether to join final approach to land again,' according to the transcript.

The pilot replied: 'Yes I want to make another try.'

Moments later, the plane plunged into a swamp close to the airport at Surat Thani, southern Thailand. The pilot was among those who died.

Some of the 45 people who survived the crash have criticised the pilot for not returning to Bangkok after the first two unsuccessful attempts.

They also said the captain told them on the plane's intercom that he was blinded by rain on his first two landing attempts.

A source close to the investigation refused to comment on the report however, and said it was too early to speculate on the cause of the crash.

"I cannot say right now what was the cause of the inci-

dent, we cannot come to a conclusion yet as there are a lot of other factors in the incident," he told AFP.

Data from the black boxes arrived back in Thailand with investigators from the United States Monday, he said, adding a meeting on the crash would be scheduled soon.

"We are trying to conclude things as soon as we can," he added.

Investigation sources had previously said conversations between the control tower and the pilot on the black box voice recorder were "barely audible."

The investigation is trying to find out if the disaster was caused by pilot error, inaccu-

rate landing information supplied by the control tower, a sudden change in weather conditions or mechanical failure.

Since the crash, it has been disclosed that the Instrument Landing System (ILS) at Surat Thani was not functioning due to work on a runway.

However, airport officials said other navigational aids were sufficient and it was up to the pilot to decide whether conditions were safe enough to land.

Officials from Thailand's aviation department, the Royal Thai Air Force, Thai Airways International and Airbus Industrie joined the investigation in the U.S.

## Bounty's cannon raised from the deep

BRISBANE, Australia (AP) — One of the cannons from the Bounty, the ship made famous in the mutiny against Captain Bligh, has been raised from the sea near Pitcairn Island in the South Pacific, researchers said Monday.

A maritime archaeology expedition from Townsville's James Cook University and residents of Pitcairn Island retrieved the weapon by building an intricate air-powered lifting device.

They used the machine to extricate the 800 kilogram cannon from 200

years of marine growth in Pitcairn's Bounty Bay and bring it carefully ashore, expedition leader Nigel Erskine said.

Pitcairn is the island where Fletcher Christian and a group of Bounty mutineers and Tahitians fled in 1789 to avoid being recaptured by the British.

One of the mutineers, terrified that the British would find them on Pitcairn, set fire to the Bounty, scuttling the vessel off the coast.

The mutineers remained on Pitcairn undetected until 1808.

The British Admiralty sent

the HMS Pandora to capture the Bounty mutineers and bring them back to England for trial.

The crew of the Pandora successfully recaptured mutineers who had remained in Tahiti after the mutiny, but did not find Christian and the other men hiding on Pitcairn.

After months of fruitless searching in the South Pacific, the Pandora turned for home, only to be wrecked off the northeastern end of Australia's Great Barrier Reef in 1791.

Artefacts retrieved over the past few years from the Pandora will housed in the

new Museum of Tropical Queensland.

The James Cook University expedition has also retrieved other items from the Bounty, including rigging, hull timbers, cannon balls and grapeshot and lead drains used for the watering system for breadfruit in Tahiti.

Erskine and the expedition went to Pitcairn last September and was due to return at the end of next month.

They have also excavated the original house sites of John Adams, Christian and his son Thursday October.

## French conservatives cry betrayal after making deal with left

PARIS (AP) — Leaders of French conservative parties were accusing each other of betrayal Monday after a centre-right politician made a deal with Socialists over the weekend to win an important regional post.

Anne-Marie Comparini, a member of the centre-right Union for French Democracy, or UDF, was elected head of the regional council in the southeastern Rhone-Alpes area Saturday, but only after accepting left support from Socialist members.

The election followed two days of manoeuvring and has plunged the right, already splintered, into further disarray.

Members of the Gaullist Rally for the Republic, or RPR, party said they were furious with the UDF for making a deal with the left. "Who is dividing us today?" RPR general secretary Nicolas Sarkozy asked in a radio interview Monday. "It is those making alliances with the left."

But Francois Bayrou, UDF president, defended Comparini against charges of betrayal, saying the weekend vote showed that the left and the right could work together to fight extremism.

"If the RPR thinks they can whistle and have everyone follow them, they are wrong," UDF president

Francois Bayrou was quoted as saying Monday in the daily Liberation.

The conservative coalition was initially shattered in June 1997 after President Jacques Chirac called early legislative elections in a bid to strengthen his position, only to see his centre-right majority swept away by a Socialist-led coalition.

And the right was further rattled last year when Former Defence Minister Charles Millon, then the head of the Rhone-Alpes regional council, accepted support from the far-right National Front in his bid for reelection.

Several other mainstream conservatives accepted

votes from the National Front, pushing rightist leaders to purge the rebellious members and form a new organisation called the Alliance.

Conservatives said Monday that the new bickering on the right could harm conservatives' chances in the upcoming European parliamentary elections.

"What is happening in Rhone-Alpes doesn't bode well for the formation of a common list for the European elections," Philippe Vasseur, vice president of the free market-oriented Liberal Democracy party said in a television interview.

## Italian police arrest suspected mafia killers

VITTORIA, Sicily (R) — Italian police said Monday they had arrested 20 suspected members of a Mafia clan believed to be behind the worst gangland killing in eight years.

Roberto Ripollino, a colonel in the carabinieri paramilitary police, told reporters those arrested included three suspected of ordering the murders in the southern Sicilian town of Ragusa on Jan. 2, and a hitman who allegedly carried them out.

Five men were shot dead in the attack as they drank coffee in a bar. Police said at the time they believed the killing was part of a feud between rival clans over control of lucrative drug rackets.

The dead included two bystanders who were shot merely because they had witnessed the crime. One of the detainees was the brother of a Mafia boss killed in the attack, police said.

Italian Prime Minister Massimo D'Alema and top ministers held an emergency meeting last week on the

upsurge in gang violence. Justice Minister Oliviero Diliberto said the government planned to pour more staff and resources into Sicily.

D'Alema said the state had clearly not won the war against the Mafia but it would be wrong to suggest the south was in the hands of the criminal organisation.

Italian police have scored numerous successes since the twin murders in 1992 of star anti-Mafia judges Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino, which convulsed the country and roused public opinion against the Mafia.

The following year authorities captured "boss of bosses" Salvatore "Totò" Riina, who had been on the run for nearly a quarter of a century.

Last November, police said they had come closer than ever before to seizing Bernardo Provenzano, the elusive boss who has not been seen in public for three decades and who is believed to have stepped into Riina's shoes.

## Pakistan court orders executions suspended

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP) — The Supreme Court Monday ordered all executions handed down by special military courts in southern Sindh province suspended until a hearing decides whether these courts are legal.

Two executions have been carried out in the past two weeks.

Another four people are on death row awaiting execution by hanging. The executions were temporarily halted Friday, but it wasn't clear whether the suspension would continue.

In a three-page letter to his attorney general, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif argued in favour of the military courts explaining what he called the extraordinary circumstances under which they were established.

The letter was read out before a seven-member bench of the supreme court Monday which in a terse two sentence order demanded the suspension of executions until after a hearing which will begin on Feb. 1.

An ethnic party in southern Sindh province is challenging the legality of the military courts. They say Sharif's government is using the military courts to hunt down, prosecute and execute its members in an attempt to destroy their party called the Muttahida Qami Movement.

Politically powerful in Karachi, the capital of Sindh and the largest city of Pakistan, the MQM represents Urdu-speaking Indians who migrated to

## Snowfall causes havoc in France

LYON, France (AFP) — Heavy snowfalls and icy winds caused road and rail havoc in eastern and southern France, with tens of thousands of homes left without electricity.

In the Rhone-Alpes region around Lyon, police reported traffic jams several kilometres long on the A7 motorway south of Montelimar, while trains between Lyon and Paris were delayed between one and three hours after snow damaged electric power lines.

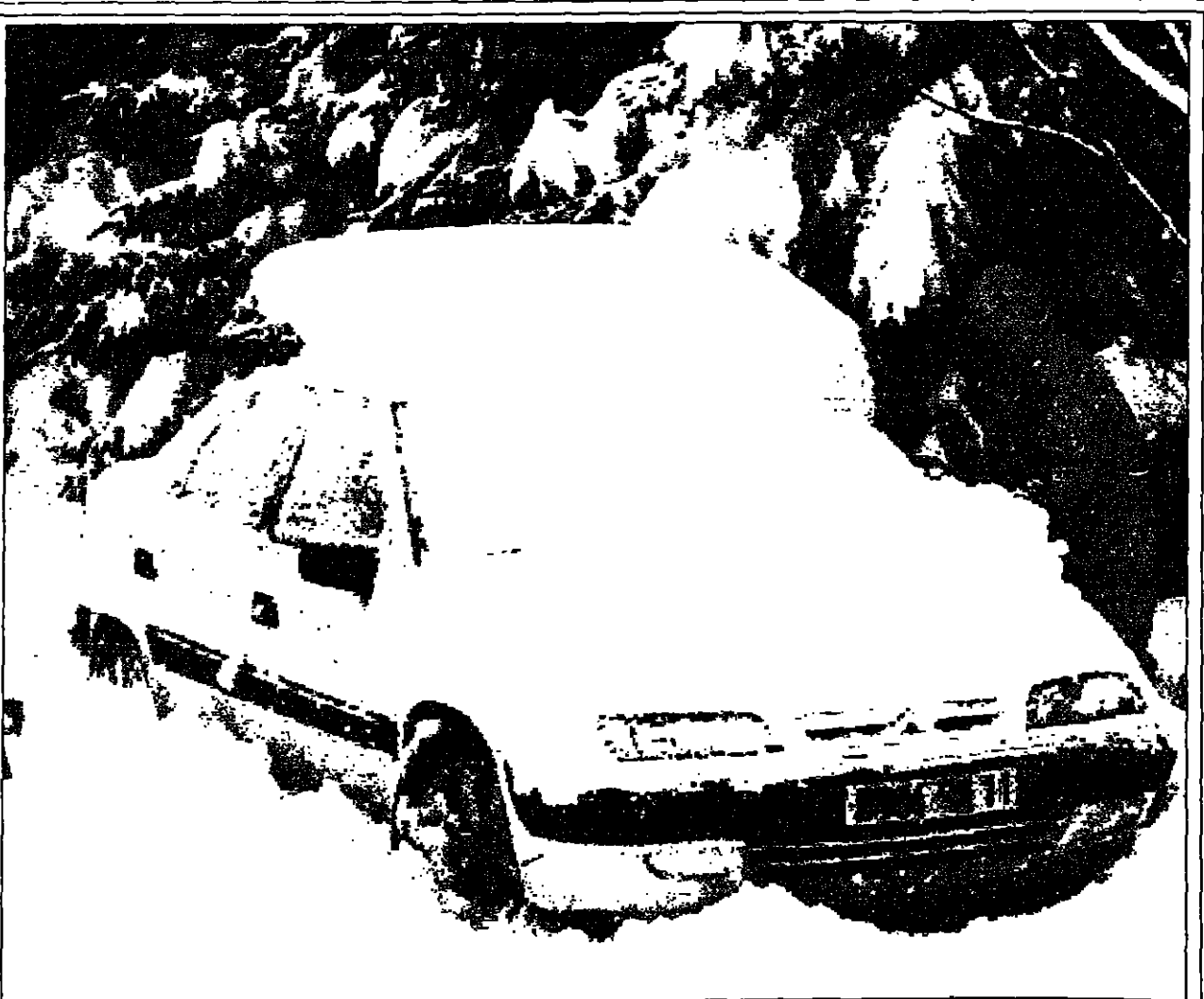
Northbound lanes on the A7 motorway were cut off to traffic south of Montelimar late morning due to heavy snow that has trapped several lorries. The road had been cut off several times in the night as

winds brought down power-lines. Rescue-workers meanwhile were called in throughout the area to clear other roads of fallen trees and power and phone-lines.

As many as 25,000 homes were without electricity in villages in the southern Drome and Ardeche areas also due to damage by snow to power-lines.

Traffic was also slowed in the departments of the Loire, Ain and Ardeche.

The sudden cold came only five days after freak weather had brought temperatures in some areas to an all-time high for the time of year. The temperature in Paris last week reached a record of 16 degrees Celsius, more than twice the normal average for the season.



A driver digs out his car from a snowbank close to Perpignan following a night of heavy snowfall in several French regions (Reuters photo)

## Texas court postpones execution of prisoner who vowed to resist guards

HOUSTON (AP) — An appeals court has postponed the execution of a convicted murderer who has vowed to "fight like hell" when guards arrive to escort him to the death chamber.

Prison officials had planned to use shackles and armour-clad guards Monday to take Gary Graham to his execution if he followed through on a promise to violently resist.

"I intend to fight like hell," he said last week while urging supporters to show up at the Huntsville, Texas, prison

armed "with picket signs, with rifles, with shotguns, with AK-47s and whatever else is necessary and required to defend our rights."

Instead, the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals Sunday postponed Graham's death, saying it needed more time to "evaluate the issues presented in this complex case." The court did not specify what it needed to review.

Graham, 35, was convicted in the May 1981 shooting death of Bobby Lambert dur-

ing a robbery outside a Houston supermarket.

Dianne Clements, president of the Houston-based victims' rights group Justice For All, noted that Graham's conviction already has been the subject of 35 judicial reviews.

"There's no reason to believe that this 36th review will not yield the same results: not credible, guilty as charged," Mrs. Clements said Sunday.

But Graham's attorney, Richard Burr, said the appeals court "did exactly

what it should have done, which is to give themselves more time to look at this issue." Officials with the Texas attorney general's office, which could appeal the ruling, did not return a message from The Associated Press Sunday.

In fighting his execution, Graham has attracted support from the likes of actor Danny Glover, entertainer Harry Belafonte, filmmaker Spike Lee and Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan.

He maintains he did not kill Lambert.



## Jordan Times

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## Justice in civil society

THE HIGH Criminal Court recently commuted the death sentence on a man convicted of killing his brother to 10 years in prison. The decision to rescind the death sentence falls in line with an international trend against capital punishment. That aspect is positive. But, the negative dimension to the verdict is that the reduction of the term of imprisonment of the convict to only 10 years with hard labour was possible because the "personal right" of the victim's family was waived.

We have seen time and again how families of victims play an effective role in determining the length and type of sentence imposed on individuals convicted of crimes. Particularly alarming is the resorting to this judicial precedent in so-called "honour crimes" which have led to the literal exoneration of murderers who commit their heinous crimes in the name of family honour. Admittedly, our penal laws allow for the reduction of judicial punishments when the family of the victim in question waives its "rights." We believe that this judicial practice is unwarranted and leads to unfair trials.

When a person is murdered, the crime is no longer a personal issue that can be determined and judged on the basis of what that person's immediate family might or might not say. Crimes are a public concern and only public interest should play a part in the trial of criminals and their sentencing. Our related laws must be amended accordingly, because legislation based on the strength and effect of personal rights are a relic of the past tribal era.

At a time when we are preparing to enter the 21st century, the administration of justice should no longer be based on tribal practice. Tribal justice once served as a useful purpose when there were no civil society and no civil courts. We should no longer be dependent on tribal justice as our courts are more than adequate to administer civil justice. It is high time we conduct a thorough review of our criminal code, and bring it in line with contemporary situations.

### ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra't's Kheirallah Kheirallah said that at the moment the region appears to be full of developments. On the Israeli front, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has lost his internal "battle" and was forced to go through early elections. Netanyahu knows he will not win unless a miracle takes place; if the Palestinian opposition abroad serve him in some way, said Kheirallah, or if he pursues some kind of an adventure along the lines of Israel's strike against the Iraqi nuclear reactor in 1981. Israel has turned into an "ill and divided" society, which is not aware of its objectives, said the writer and added that there is no doubt that a Palestinian state will become a reality, especially with Hillary Clinton and Jacques Chirac's recent statements that the peace process has to be accompanied by such a state. Moreover, the Israeli Labour Party and General Shabak, a strong nominee for Netanyahu's post, both support that idea, according to Kheir Allah. What is the prime minister going to do? Will he depend on Arab and non-Arab extremists to hand him a way out of his predicament, or will he attack Lebanon, Iraq or Iran, asked the writer. The region is at a melting point, not because of the drop in oil prices or the Iraq crisis but because of a "dangerous" man like "Bibi," Kheir Allah stated.

Al Dustour's Oraib Rintawi discussed steps to activate Jordan's political system. In order to activate the elections system, its laws need to be amended: the seats regulation; the one-vote law, the quotas of bedouins, parties and women's organisation all have to be reconsidered and gradually replaced, said Rintawi. Such reevaluation should include the proposal of an election for prime ministers once every four years in line with the Lower House of Parliament to ensure stability of governments, support the executive authority, enable political parties and the civil society's institutions to grow and deepen public participation, added the writer. The political system's social bases should be renewed, the idea of citizenship should be strengthened and the competition between civil society's institutions should be activated, according to Rintawi. The writer urged the public sector to set up a political research national committee or centre to help implement the above mentioned objectives.

# Fantasy and failure in Iraq and the Gulf

I THOUGHT I was in a time capsule Sunday when I heard the Iraqi parliament's call effectively not to recognise the borders of Kuwait — a flashback to one of the basic problems that prompted Iraq's occupation of Kuwait in August 1990.

Technically, the Iraqi parliament called for scrapping U.N. Security Council resolution 883 of 1993, which demarcated the long-disputed Iraqi-Kuwaiti border. Politically, the Iraqi parliament's suggestion is part of a wider Iraqi assault against the punitive measures that Iraq has been subjected to in recent years — the U.N. economic embargo, the system to inspect and eliminate its weapons of mass destruction, recurring American-British air attacks, and the Anglo-American no-fly zones in north and south Iraq. The startling fact of this week is that we seem to have returned — stumbling, bleeding, and no wiser — to August 1990, with all the problems of that time still with us.

The most chilling replay of past failures is the spectacle of a fresh young face — British prime minister Tony Blair — engaging in stale old habits, namely touring Arab Gulf states this week and promising swift military actions to prevent Iraq from threatening "its neighbours or the stability of the region." The sad facts of Iraq and the Gulf today are as follows:

1. The fundamental issue of the sovereign borders of Iraq and Kuwait remains unresolved, as it has been since colonial Great Britain essentially created the issue a century or so ago.
2. The Gulf region is more unstable than it was in 1990, due to the volatility and near desperation of Iraq itself, the permanent presence of tens of thousands of Anglo-American troops, and the serious internal economic pressures facing most Gulf states.
3. The capacity of the United Nations and other international agencies to monitor Iraq's weapons systems or to mediate peaceful solutions in the region has been seriously damaged by the Anglo-American bombings and the infiltration of the U.N. inspections system by American and other foreign spies. Also, the Anglo-American habit of re-defining U.N. resolutions to fit their own aims has weakened the U.N. Security Council's ability to be an instrument of collective international peace-keeping; the Anglo-American claim that U.N. Security Council resolutions 678 of 1990 and 1154 of 1998 give them authority to bomb Iraq and impose a no-flight zone is legal, diplomatic, and moral rubbish of the highest order.
4. Public sentiments in the Mideast and globally are shifting

considerably. Many more people today question the moral and political appropriateness of Anglo-American militarism, see Iraq as having been disarmed and contained, and support Iraq's claim to end the economic embargo against it. The most dramatic expression of this shift came from Saudi Arabia this week, in the form of reports of a planned Saudi initiative to ease the embargo against the Iraqi civilian population.

5. There has been no appreciable progress in addressing any of the underlying distortions and problems that fuelled the 1990 Gulf crisis or that plague the modern Arab World — namely, a) autocratic Arab governance systems that often become ghastly police states, usually with the active support of Western powers; b) global double standards in using force to implement U.N. resolutions against Iraq, but not those against Israel; c) global double standards in addressing the problem of occupied or contested lands around the world (e.g., Palestine, Lebanon, Kuwait, Cyprus, Kashmir, East Timor, Western Sahara, Northern Ireland, southern Sudan, and many others); d) global double standards in seeking non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction among some Arabs versus amongst others India, Pakistan, North Korea and, e) a

## View from the Fourth Circle



Rami G. Khouri

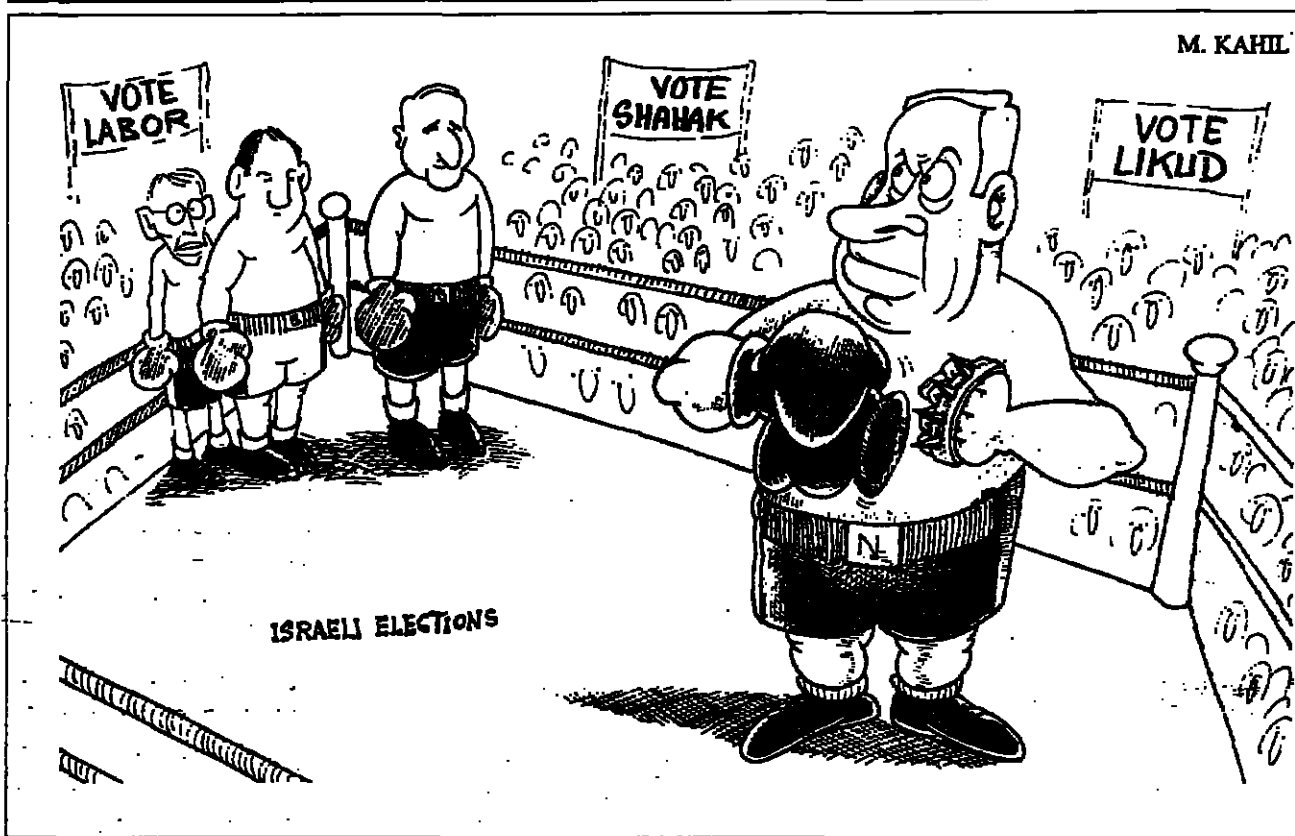
legacy of troubled modern Arab statehood rooted in colonial divisions of this region, divisions that have bedevilled its people with abnormal disparities in natural assets and socio-economic well-being.

Eight years after these issues first reared their large and formidable head during the 1991 Gulf war, they remain still as the underlying causes of tension, violence and instability in the Middle East. This is a rather astounding collective indictment of the political irresponsibility and incompetence of the concerned Iraqi, American, British and Gulf Arab leaderships.

It is not so surprising — though still troubling — that Iraqi voices

today repeat their claim to Kuwait. This should remind us that the last eight years' policy of trying to promote stability and the national rights of all in the Gulf region by the use of force — by Iraq, some Arab Gulf states, and Anglo-American youth — has failed. There must be a better way of achieving those legitimate goals that we and the world agree on — ensuring the security of all existing states in this region; preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction; promoting good governance, civility, and human rights; and enhancing living standards and stability through regional economic integration.

Tony Blair sits in British fighter airplanes in the Gulf this week, gets all excited and smug, and fantasises about sending a signal of resoluteness and toughness; the tragedy is, he does not realise that in reality he is the symbol of a colossal and recurring failure. For well over a century, his country has had to keep sending regular military forces and the odd prime minister to ensure stability and happy days in distant Arabia — but there is neither happiness nor stability in those lands, only more soldiers and more pain. Something must be very wrong beneath the surface of this entire spectacle. (For those interested, please see number 5 above).



## Vanessa Redgrave: Hero and role model

By Ray Hanania

IT WAS the Spring of 1978 and I was, like most Americans, sitting in front of my TV set wondering which movie was going to win the Oscar for Best Movie. The competition included: "Annie Hall," "Goodbye Girl," "Julia," "Star Wars," and "Turning Point," all premiered the previous year. My favourites were "Star Wars" and "Close Encounters of the Third Kind," which was up for other nominations that year.

Well, "Annie Hall" won as "Best Movie." The Best Actor award went to Richard Dreyfuss and Best Actress was Diane Keaton. Then there were the lesser awards for Best Supporting Actor, which went to Jason Robards for his portrayal in "Julia," a movie about Nazi persecution of Jews during World War II, and Best Supporting Actress that went to Vanessa Redgrave, for her portrayal in the same movie, "Julia," too.

I hadn't heard much about Redgrave prior to that time. But she came to the podium and began her acceptance speech by noting that outside the auditorium where the Oscars were being held, belligerent members of the extremist organisation, the Jewish Defence League (JDL), were protesting against her. And she was wearing what looked like a traditional Palestinian embroidered dress.

My eyes and ears perked. The JDL was the anti-Arab terrorist organisation of the 70s who enjoyed a double standard in America and the West. While Arab terrorism was constantly being denounced, the terrorism of the fanatic JDL was being ignored.

In all the years I had been watching the Academy Award presentation, I don't recall ever seeing an Arab win. Certainly, it was not the place for politics, but the JDL had certainly decided to turn that year's event into a political imbroglio. The JDL was getting a lot of sympathetic media coverage, and the protest prompted Redgrave to respond, since it was at the Oscars that the protest was taking place. Redgrave held her head high, aware of the bigotry that existed among the auditorium filled with people whose careers were built upon producing and directing dozens of anti-Arab movies over the years. She declared defiantly that she would not be intimidated by "a small bunch of Zionist hoodlums whose behaviour is an insult to the stature of Jews all over the world."

I remember jumping to my feet and waving my hands in the air cheering like it was the New Year. Because in effect, Vanessa Redgrave had, at least for me, ushered in a new era. She was among the first people I had ever heard of who dared to stand up to the hateful filmmakers who churned out dozens and dozens of movies founded on anti-Arab themes, stereotypes and falsehoods.

My mother couldn't figure out what the

commotion was, and when I explained, a smile crossed her face, too.

As Arab Americans, we knew all too well how difficult it was to live in this country even back in the 70s, the so-called years of American civil liberty enlightenment. For everyone else, maybe, but not for Arab Americans.

She sat with me. Soon, my brother and sister were watching the Oscars. I am sure my dad, who passed away a few years earlier, was watching, too. And that's just about when a short little jerk named Paddy Chayefsky stepped up to the microphone as one of the award presenters. He is the racist who produced the movie Network, which included several gratuitous anti-Arab references.

Chayefsky denounced Redgrave as every member of the Hanania family stood up and hollered and hooted at the TV screen. Redgrave had beat out Melinda Dillon (Close Encounters of the Third Kind), Quinn Cummings (Goodbye Girl), Tuesday Weld (Looking for Mr. Goodbar), and Leslie Browne (Turning Point) in winning her Oscar award.

Afterwards, I listened as news announcers and Hollywood commentators started to denounce Redgrave, all because she had stood up for herself and refused to be intimidated by the JDL thugs. The JDL was angry because Redgrave had the previous November completed a second movie, besides "Julia," called "The Palestinian."

Ironically, it was her role in "Julia" that led Redgrave to become aware of the plight of the Palestinians. While making "Julia" in Paris in 1976, she came to know a young Palestinian couple and their friends. They told her about the siege of Tel Al Zaatar, a Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon, which right-wing Phalangist militias trained by Israel had bombarded for months, cutting the inhabitants down with sniper fire when they dared to leave the camp for water. By the end of the siege, 3,500 men, women and children had been killed.

"What had happened at Tel Al Zaatar was so hideous that I immediately wanted to do something to assist the situation," Redgrave later wrote. What she did was recruit a film crew in France and Italy, hire a director, sell her two houses in London to raise the necessary funds, and in the spring of 1977 set out for Lebanon to make a film about the Palestinians.

"The Palestinian" premiered in November 1977 at the London Film Festival, but in the U.S. neither the Public Broadcasting Service nor any other network would show it. Because of her sympathy for the Palestinians, she was accused of being a terrorist.

In 1980, she agreed to perform in a new movie, "Playing for Time," and to portray

Fania Fenelon Goldstein, the Holocaust survivor who wrote the book on which the script was based. The book was a salute to the strength of Jewish survivors of the Holocaust, yet anti-Arab leaders throughout the world denounced Redgrave's being selected to play the concentration camp inmate.

"It's a horrible insult. Six million Jews will roll over in their graves," said Jewish Defence League leader Irv Rubin. Howard Squadron, president of the American Jewish Congress, called Redgrave's selection for the role "grotesque." Even Goldstein, provoked by the anti-Arab hysteria and lies that were being published, protested the casting, asserting ignorantly that Redgrave "is known to be anti-Semitic."

Redgrave was well-known for her support of peoples around the world who were victims of persecution. She has supported such causes as nuclear disarmament, opposition to the Vietnam war, independence for northern Ireland, freedom for Soviet Jews, and aid for Bosnian Muslims and other victims of Serb aggression. In 1993, Redgrave was awarded the Sakharov medal by Elena Bonner for her efforts on behalf of Soviet Jews. During the early 1970s she put the money she earned from films into a charitable trust for disadvantaged children, and in 1973 she built and equipped a nursery school for children in a poverty-stricken area of London. In 1980, her effigy burned outside studios in Hollywood and Philadelphia. In Philadelphia, snipers fired shots into one of the buildings. The Los Angeles station KNXT-TV reported "numerous bomb threats."

The blacklisting, which reminded many of the blacklisting of Jews from Hollywood productions by Senator Joseph McCarthy in the 1950s, continued. In April 1982 the Boston Symphony Orchestra cancelled a sold-out performance of Stravinsky's "Oedipus Rex," with narration by Vanessa Redgrave, because some financial supporters of the orchestra claimed her appearance would offend the Jewish community. Several American productions have been cancelled since because of hatred directed toward Redgrave's appearances.

To me, and to most Arab Americans and Arabs around the world, Redgrave stands for what is just in this world, a reminder that justice is not the privilege of those who have power or numbers in public opinion, but by everyone, including a small minority of people whose lands were stolen from them in 1947.

The writer is a Palestinian American author and journalist.

## LETTERS

### Best wishes

To His Majesty:

IT WAS WITH great pain that I learnt nearly six months ago that Your Majesty was ill. I have closely followed since then every news item on your health.

Somewhat, Your Majesty is the senior-most member of my family. Well, that was the sentiment I came away with after spending nearly two decades in Jordan. I cherish those years.

Your physical appearance at the signing of the Wye agreement was indeed a bit disturbing, but after listening to your passionate appeal for peace and coexistence and your reiteration of your beliefs and convictions, I was convinced that you were on the way to recovery from the illness.

It was with great relief that I listened in the last few days to His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan and Jordanian government leaders assuring the Jordanian people, and indeed people like me and my family, that Your Majesty is completely cured and would be home soon.

I pray for Your Majesty's continued good health and implore God that He preserves Your Majesty, for the people of Jordan and all others who adore and respect you for what you are and what you stand for.

P.V. Vivekanand  
 Sharjah, UAE  
 Email: anand@alkhaleej.co.ae

## Foreign investment

To the editor:

INCREASING FOREIGN investment in Jordan is one of the most talked about and emphasised objectives of various governments in the past ten years or so.

It is always looked upon as one of the saviours of the economy, but unfortunately no serious action was taken to promote this objective.

We have to be more practical and objective in dealing with this issue.

Foreign investment will only be attracted to any country if one or all the following factors are obtained:

1. A local consumer market that was either closed to imports or, by being close, higher returns can be achieved.
2. Cheap labour and resources as well as a central geographical location to base an offshore industry.
3. Free economy and a safe haven from complicated and bureaucratic governmental procedures and restrictions.

It is very obvious that what we have, or ought to have, in Jordan is the third option; and what falls in this category are mainly offshore companies and regional offices.

The legal incentives are often construed as merely duty-free perks, but that is not the case. I do agree that a lot of people are taking advantage of the system, but why penalise what can be a great asset for this country, because the government can't or will not deal with exemptions to the rule.

A lot of companies are fed up with being treated as opportunists, and are looking at other options that offer the same if not better incentives for investment.

If the government is serious about promoting business in Jordan, a body should be created, to look into the earnestness of each regional office in the country and evaluate it accordingly.

We have been operating in Jordan for more than ten years, with more than ten local employees, and a yearly expenditure of over half a million dollars. As a result of us, ten million dollars of hard currency floating through the Jordanian banking system every year. I do not expect to be harassed every time we get a sample sent to the country.

Roger R. Zambak  
 Amedo Sewing Machines Jordan Ltd.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions

from its readers on any issue they wish to tackle.

Letters intended for publication should contain the

writer's full name and preferably address as well.

Names can be withheld upon request but only under

special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing

and abridging.

By John Wa

## Scient elephant

By Thanaporn Promyayai

THAILAND'S CIVIL service has been hit by a wave of corruption, with many officials being investigated for misappropriation of funds.

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# What planet are you on?

By John Walsh

YE GODS, what a year. "Sorting out a more satisfactory emotional base" for my life was "the driving motivation" for the first half, while "high ambitions" took up the second. My nearest and dearest were a shocking liability throughout. One "family member" acted in "erratic unpredictable ways" in February. A frankly knackered "social whiff" in early spring was followed by "a more demanding mood" in which everyone had "over-high expectations" of me, the fools. Everyone in my entire life seemed "on edge" in April, but then "joint finances" improved and I threw myself into a "secret romance" which, all too predictably, I'm afraid, made April 20 "sticky".

I was "emotionally topsy-turvy" on May 7 but, bang on cue, "finances" improved again, once they were given my "wholehearted attention." My "sunny charm" knocked everyone dead in early summer, enabling me to keep my "hidden agenda" up my sleeve, before I legged it to "fly free" to "green-ery pastures." But sadly, by July my life had descended into turmoil once more: an eclipse of the sun warned me that "a career push" was "vital," and it was all I could do to stop myself being "distracted" by "emotional muddles." Sadly, my professional clear-sightedness didn't stop another bout of "sticky moments" and I strove unavailingly to "keep my temper steady," "hold to compromises," and "find a middle way between neither pushing too hard nor being pushed around."

My family, not surprisingly, found themselves "on tenterhooks" in August, as I flailed about in this socio-economic maelstrom, and the kindly attention of "close partners" was thwarted as they found, yet again, my "attention diverted to sorting out finances." Honestly, its like being married to Gordon Brown. As the year drew to a close I narrowly avoided having to "rub up against rather tricky people," and refused to "suffer fools gladly" around my birthday on

October 24, contenting myself with "pulling strings behind the scenes."

I certainly didn't want any "unresolved clutter," as I approached Christmas, and "getting finances into shape," when I'd rather have been out getting sloshed, meant I had to "resist the temptation to fly off the handle." But luckily I found "a gentle way of letting off steam" — possibly at the Priory in Rochester — and ended the year bravely staring at "the momentous turning-point of the century."

Because, as you will have guessed, the year I've been looking back on with such drained exhaustion is 1999. I've just been reading Marjorie Orr's month-by-month horoscope in The Express for my life, right through this year, and by the time I reached the end, I felt like lying down in a cave until it was all over. Its not the "predictions" that bother me — nothing concrete is predicted — its the prevailing note of frantic emotional activity. According to the clairvoyant Ms. Orr, I will spend the year on a roller-coaster of emotion, swinging between confusion and impotent fury, endlessly upset, bothered, under-valued and over-provoked by a puzzling spouse and traitorous work colleagues, forever balancing the account books and constantly defending myself against strange, unnameable crises.

I do not know Ms. Orr, but I suspect she is the kind of friend we all need in a crisis — one of utter unflappable conservatism, whose conversation is a succession of emollient platitudes about casting no clout, taking the rough with the smooth, not throwing out the baby with the bath water. She would never, you feel, be the one to say, "Oh for God's sake just leave the bastard," or "Of course you should take the job," or

"Just try a little snort of this, you'll like it." For she is one of the nation's leading "sun-star columnists" as hack astrologers are sometimes called, and her function is to reassure — to whisper in her readers' ears that, although their lives are amazingly movimented, they must try not to be swept away by the stormy emotions and crazy scenes with which their days will be filled.

Astrology is an odd profession, beginning in Babylonian starlight, 4,000 years ago, made up of equal

our imaginations. When the Darwinist Professor Richard Dawkins trashed the whole subject of astrology in The Independent on Sunday in 1995, saying that its professional exponents should be jailed for fraud, the resulting correspondence filled acres of newspaper.

At this time of year, its also a goldmine for newspapers and magazines. When the next 12 months will pitch us straight into a new century and into a whole thousand-year epoch, the whole business takes on a kind

of epic urgency: the only thing bigger than the passage of centuries, millennia and eras is the firmament itself, whose stars have outlasted them all, and from which we try to learn what will become of us and how we should live.

Apart from being perhaps the only metaphysical impulse that most of the population will have embraced since the days of choir practice and Sunday school, astrology is also democratic. The stars that are common to all of us, that shone for both Julius Caesar and his chariot-minding slave, are the governing influences upon great and humble alike.

If Mars and Pluto (which rule Scorpio with dynamic and power-crazed ruthlessness, and are the reason girls give Scorpio chaps a wide berth at parties) are both in Sagittarius next September, playing hell with my capacity to make any money, though at least I can be comforted that the Prince of Wales (Scorpio, born November 14) is in the same yacht. This accounts for the secondary phenomenon of early January — a rash of predictions of how the year will pan out for various "celebrities": how Zoë Ball will have a baby and Jerry Hall will win a huge divorce settlement against Mick Jagger (says the Sunday People), how Ann Widdecombe and Peter Mandelson, both Librarians, will be transformed "from villains to heroes," and the entire cast of Friends (mostly Leos, spookily) will come unstuck, according to Shelley von Strunckel in The Sunday Times.

The Express and the Daily Mail are currently in the midst of a soothsayer bangle for readers. The Mail offers "Jonathan Cainer's Millennium Countdown" all this week (yesterday Love, today Wealth) and a "Personal Horoscope" special free offer. The Express has the sainted Ms Orr's "Your Stars for 1999" running all week, with an eight-page pullout guide in colour. The Express offer was flagged, last weekend, by a TV commercial featuring Ms Orr, a grand, duchess-like figure, explaining why she is a good astrologer to a snappish, disembodied telephone voice, presumably The Express's abrasive editrix Rosie Boycott.

"No it wasn't me," said Boycott. It's all fiction. But the reason why we do it is because horoscopes sell papers. At this time of the year we expect to add as many as 80,000 to the sales figures. "At what cost of investment?" It's done on

newsprint, and it's written by the staff astrologist, so it doesn't cost us much — in the region of £12,000.

Did a sophisticated rationalist like herself believe in star signs? "To an extent. I think horoscopes are good if they can nudge you psychologically towards something you've been half-thinking, and crystallise the thought. It's all about language. The good ones write well."

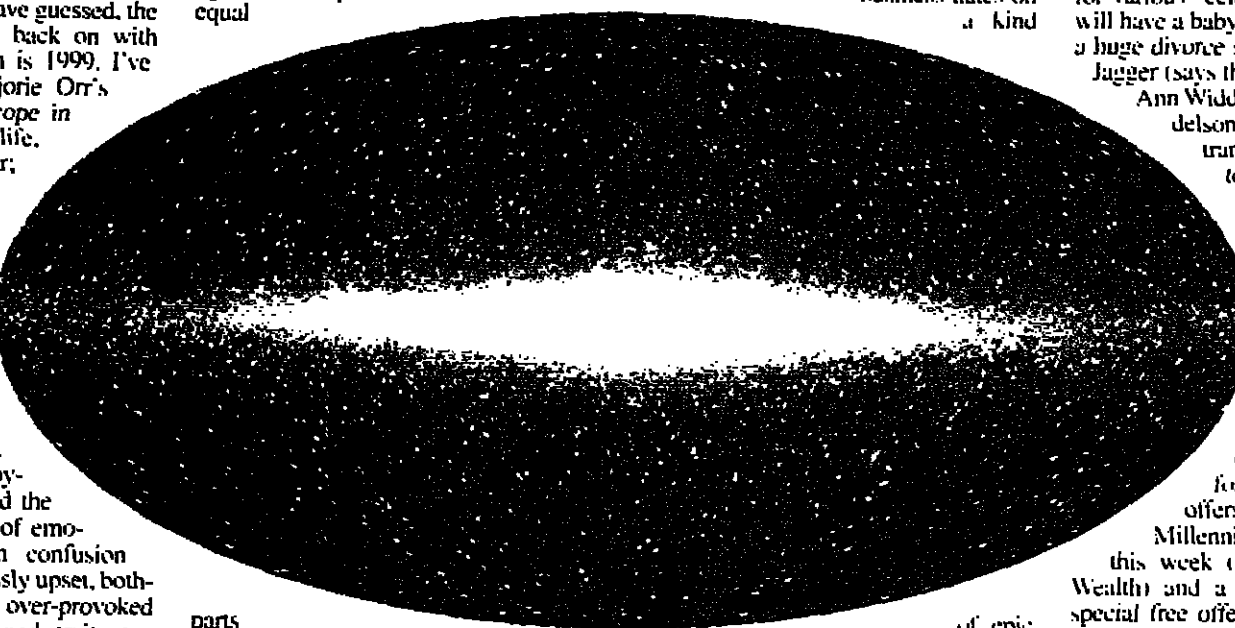
The language issue is not one that springs to mind. Mischa O'Connor in today's Daily Star advises, "Borrow an item instead of buying it and you'll save some much-needed cash." Gemini Jane in The Sun suggests, "It is a great time to renovate or decorate your home."

Justin Toper in The Mirror, a man who fatally resembles a Glitter Band roadie circa 1972, goes for a more direct and positive approach — yesterday he promised Leos that "something wonderful is about to take place" and Scorpios "You are about to enjoy a whole new way of life." But then Mr. Toper lives on Paradise Island in the Bahamas, and is entitled to a little euphoria.

A more teasing note is struck by Jonathan Cainer in the Mail. "Things have to be different in 1999," he announces boldly. "You already know, I'm sure, the things to which I refer. Why, then, does this send shock waves down your spine? Don't you trust the sky to take care of all your emotional needs?"

Then, perhaps fearing he is being over-deterministic, he writes, "Are you worrying about going from frying-pan to fire?" and we're back with the essence of horoscope writing: blandness, holding steady, walking your own path, playing strategic game, finding the middle way. The trick is to make the seething neurotic mass of horoscope readers feel congratulated on their indecision, fêted for their selfishness, praised for allowing forces outside themselves to run their lives. No wonder its been a potent tool with which to quieten the proletariat for 4,000 years.

— The Independent



## Scientists aim to clone elephant super breed

By Thanaporn Promyamyai  
Agence France Presse

THAILAND'S OVERWORKED elephants could be saved from looming extinction if scientists achieve their dream of cloning a new super breed from the remains of a royal jumbo which died 100 years ago.

Researchers here hope to engineer genetically a new strain of elephant to replenish the species' drastically dwindling numbers in Thailand, which proudly displays the beast as a national symbol.

They even hope eventually to extract genetic material from the preserved remains of the white elephant which belonged to Thailand's 19th century King Rama IV, to create a breed strong enough to survive centuries into the future.

"It is our dream to clone an elephant. We want to make that dream come true," veterinarian Chisanu Chiyacharnsri, secretary of Wild Animal Rescue of Thailand said.

"Cloning will improve the quality of the elephant breed and maintain a species strong enough to survive," he added.

Thailand's elephants are facing an uncertain future as hundreds of beasts are crippled by overwork and creeping birth rates threaten extinction in the next century.

There are now 2,000 wild elephants in Thailand — a

sharp drop from the 4,600 in 1983.

Some 3,000 domesticated animals stomp through hours of work a day but are dying at a rate of about 200 a year.

Worryingly, only 15 births are registered annually — a trend that must be reversed before the elephant is wiped out entirely.

The potential of cloning became fully clear when scientists in Scotland cloned Dolly the sheep from an udder cell in 1997. It was the first time a mammal had been created from adult cells.

Critics of the technique argue however that Man should not attempt to manipulate nature or to create life for his own benefit.

Chisanu's answer is that if genetic reproduction is not used Thailand's elephants will be remembered only on tourist souvenirs, flags and art.

He plans to conduct a three stage study including reproductive techniques and the hormone cycle. At least 20 million baht (half a million dollars) will be needed to be raised from the private sector for the study which is expected to take 10 years, said Sompat Meepan from Elephant Camp reserve in Ayutthaya.

"The current elephant population is not of very high quality — they have been worked too hard and will soon be gone unless owners care for them better," he said.

"If our project succeeds,

we plan to ask the King for permission to use the white elephant.

Chisanu added: "If possible, we scientists hope to clone this elephant since it is the best one ever found in the country."

The remains of the white elephant, so-called because of the purity of its character, are now preserved in alcohol in a set of glass jars in Thailand's Elephant Museum in Bangkok.

The Bangkok Mahidol University project has already been partially successful, as a cow is pregnant with a cloned embryo, reports here said.

But even the prospect of a new super-breed will not ease the anxiety of those who worry about the huge moral issues which surround cloning.

Friends of the Asian Elephant Foundation secretary general Sorida Salwala argues that cloning might in fact worsen the lot of the Thai elephant.

"I am not against the idea but the reason why we need to do it is not clear to me," she said.

"In terms of advancing science it is good but we have to consider what social advantage cloning can offer us."

"Elephants now are not used for logging anymore, we do not have the forests left for them."

Sorida said that as existing elephants had not been well treated there was no guarantee future cloned beasts would fare any better.



## Early hunters take extinctions record

By Steve Connor  
Reuters

HE WAS supposed to be the Noble Savage who was at one with nature, but new research suggests that wherever early Man went, mass extinction was sure to follow.

It has always been difficult to explain why so many of the world's largest animals — the "megafauna" — had disappeared so quickly from different regions of the world over the past 100,000 years.

Climate change was considered the reason for the extinction of giant sloths in South America, huge flightless birds in Madagascar, the sabre-toothed cats of North America and carnivorous kangaroos in Australia.

In a few thousand years Australia lost all 19 species of marsupials over 100kg in size, and 22 out of 38 species between 10 and 100kg. South Ameri-

ca fared even worse. It lost 46 of its 58 groups of large animals, including Glyptodonts (armadillos the size of vans), Macrauchenia, a long-necked camel-like animal, and Arctodus, a huge bear, half as big again as the grizzly.

Professor Gifford Miller, a scientist who dates fossils at the University of Colorado at Boulder, believes he has the first firm evidence linking the death of the megafauna with the emergence of Stone Age people at the end of the Pleistocene era — between 100,000 and 10,000 years ago. His team of researchers focused on the dating of pieces of fossilised eggshell left behind by Gerynomys, a giant flightless bird.

The scientists found that none of the eggshell fragments they analysed were younger than 50,000 years old. This coincides nicely with the date when the first humans arrived on the continent. "I think we have compelling evi-

dence that the Gerynomys extinction date is applicable to the majority of Australian megafauna," Professor Miller said.

The scientists believe that with the arrival of the first human colonisers, Australia's landscape underwent a radical change which ultimately killed off the larger animals, from giant horned tortoises as big as VW beetles and wombats the size of rhinos, to a 25-foot-long snake and a one-ton lizard.

The new arrivals are thought to have pioneered a system of land management used until recently by Aboriginal people, who would start bushfires in order to stimulate grass growth and encourage fresh game. "We suspect the systematic burning by the earliest colonisers differed enough from the natural fire cycle that key ecosystems were pushed past a threshold from which they could not recover," Professor Miller said.

Colin Tudge, a research fellow at the Centre for Philosophy at the London School of Economics, said there is now overwhelming evidence to suggest that humans were responsible for the "overkill" at the end of the Pleistocene era.

"Soon after you get humans arriving on a big continent or island, you get animals disappearing," Mr. Tudge said. The only exception is Africa, where humans and big animals co-evolved for 2 million years.

"Unlike the animals of Africa, the creatures of the Americas and Australia were totally unused to human ways," Mr. Tudge said.

"However it happened, it shows that the idea of a 'noble savage' in tune with the animals around him is a lie. The only animals we are in harmony with are the ones that we failed to knock on the head," said Mr. Tudge.

## Tigers feel the pinch in Malaysia

By Benjamin Low  
Reuters

GHAZALI ABDULLAH yelled in horror as a 68-kg tiger pounced on his 10-year-old son. Mauled from behind, the boy was screaming in pain.

"I was shouting 'Allahu Akbar!' (God is Greatest) and growing as I waved my hand to intimidate a tiger," Ghazali, 41, told the Star newspaper as he recalled the December attack in the northern state of Kelantan.

Disturbed by the father's shouts, the tiger released bleeding Mohamed Nasharuddin, who survived with 30 stitches.

The attack, which took place at the edge of

a Malaysian palm oil estate, renewed concerns over the spread of plantation land into the habitats of endangered species in the country.

"It's a known fact that we are developing a lot of land for agriculture and timber extraction. The tiger's habitat is reduced by land clearing," World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Malaysia spokesman Teoh Tek Hoong said.

As the habitats of man and wildlife have drawn closer, the chances of attacks by animals have increased dramatically, environmental activists say.

Game rangers from Malaysia's Wildlife and National Parks Department, Perlitan, and

even the country's army have been mobilised to track down the tiger that attacked Nasharuddin.

Three traps were set without success.

Perlitan officials said they were confident the tiger would eventually be captured and sent to a zoo.

"But if it's not possible, we'll have to use the last resort. We'll have to shoot it because if you don't do that, it may cause a lot of negative circumstances," Perlitan's wildlife management unit chief E. Sivaranthan told Reuters.

In July, rangers shot dead a tiger that had killed two men and some livestock, outraging conservationists.

Tigers are highly endangered. Globally, some 5,000 to 7,500 tigers survive in the wild, according to WWF Malaysia.

The Indo-Chinese tiger is the only species in Malaysia. Of the 2,000 Indo-Chinese tigers in the world, about 500 roam the jungles of peninsular Malaysia, Perlitan estimates.

Historically, the world's largest cat has been revered in Malaysia as a symbol of strength and power. The country's royal crest portrays two tigers on either side of the coat of arms.

But as recently as the 1950s, before concerns over the tiger's extinction had grown, authorities were still encouraging tiger hunting.

In 1976, the tiger was classified as a Totally Protected Animal under Malaysia's Protection of Wild Life Act, making it illegal to kill tigers. Instances of the tiger being killed for its body parts, once popularly used in traditional

medicines and for ornamental purposes, may be decreasing.

But experts say increased land clearing in recent years has become a major threat, endangering the tiger's habitat.

"Perhaps with the economic slowdown there is extra pressure on land clearing because the government is encouraging agriculture," Teoh said.

Palm oil, quoted in U.S. dollars, has been especially lucrative as its price has risen in line with the ringgit's fall since mid-1997.

The director general of forestry for peninsular Malaysia, Hashim Saad, said last June that about three million hectares (seven million acres) of the country's 19 million hectares of forest would be cleared and eventually converted to housing, industry, agriculture and other uses.

Teoh said land development restricted the

levels of natural prey and interrupted the tiger's breeding cycle.

"The range each tiger normally needs is a radius of about 20 kilometres," Teoh said.

Inevitably, tigers find themselves within short distance of humans and livestock.

"It comes out of its habitat to look for food. Most of the time, it goes for easy prey such as cattle and goats," Teoh said, adding that an increase in forest preservation land would help protect the remaining tigers.

Using remote cameras in jungle ranges, authorities are trying to count the number of tigers — a census in the wild.

"Once this is done, we can sit down with the villagers and hopefully come up with something," Teoh said.

"We always say the tiger encroaches into human areas. But we are actually the ones who are encroaching on their habitat."



## Greenspan, international central bankers urge more reforms for Asia

HONG KONG (AFP)

U.S. Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan and 16 other international central bankers agreed Monday that Asia was recovering from economic crisis but there should be no let-up in crucial bank reforms.

Greenspan and other influential officials including European Central Bank president Wim Duisenberg and Bank of Japan chief Masaru Hayami met at the Hong Kong office of the Swiss-based Bank for International Settlements (BIS) for a "sharing of experiences," said BIS General Manager Andrew Crockett.

He told a news conference that no concrete measures emerged from the five-and-a-half hours of closed-door talks, which were intended to provide a forum for informal discussion.

"We discussed in the morning and early afternoon the international economic and financial situation," Crockett said. "We discussed for the remainder of the afternoon issues related to strengthening financial systems and bank restructuring."

He said the central bankers agreed the world economic envi-

ronment was "a reasonably positive one" and that Asia was "on the mend" but that efforts to shore up shaky banking systems needed to continue.

Each governor gave an appraisal of his domestic economy with Greenspan telling his counterparts that despite an expected easing of growth in the United States, the slowdown would be "relatively moderate," said the official from BIS, dubbed the central banks' central bank.

Hayami said Japan's economy had "reached the bottom ... and was likely to record positive growth next year," according to Crockett, while Duisenberg was confident of solid growth in the European single currency area.

On Asia "the expectation is that we are now probably past the bottom of the cycle in most countries and the prospects are that there will be some recovery from now."

"There was a broad measure of agreement that it was important to tackle bank restructuring as a matter of urgency to make sure that ... difficulties in the banking system were put behind us so that the banking systems can play their full role in promoting economic

growth," Crockett said.

The governors agreed banks had to be given a lifeline but recapitalisation had to be done properly so it did give an excuse to postpone much-needed reform, he said.

Representatives from 10 other Asian economies attended the meeting: Australia, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, South Korea and Thailand.

They were joined by the central bank chiefs of Argentina, the Czech Republic, Mexico and Saudi Arabia.

People's Bank of China governor Dai Xianglong told the meeting he did not expect the bankruptcy of Guangdong International Trust and Investment Corp. (GITIC) would lead to a credit crunch for Chinese firms, Crockett said.

Dai presented a "comprehensive report on the financial situation" in China and also "discussed the developments in individual financial institutions, including the trust and investment companies."

"Governor Dai did not suggest that ... credit constraint was a problem" with the trust and investment firms in the spotlight as nervous

foreign investors deal

with the aftermath of GITIC's bankruptcy announced on Sunday.

The role of hedge funds, blamed by many Asian leaders for allegedly destabilising their economies through market speculation, was also discussed, the BIS official told the news conference.

The central bankers discussed greater transparency and a "level playing field" to monitor movements of hedge funds, Crockett said without elaboration.

Greenspan, who earlier met Hong Kong Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa and refused to comment to reporters throughout the day, will head to Beijing on Tuesday for talks with his Chinese counterpart Dai.

Monday's meeting was the first high-level one to be held at BIS's Hong Kong office since it opened last July to provide a forum for regional banking talks.

Central bank governors from the Group of 10 leading industrialised nations meet monthly at the BIS headquarters in Basel.

## Israel's '98 trade deficit narrows by 26%

TEL AVIV (R) — Israel's trade deficit narrowed 25.7 per cent last year to \$5.83 billion as merchandise exports rose 1.9 per cent to \$21.18 billion and imports fell 5.6 per cent to \$27.01 billion, the government said Monday.

It was the second annual decline since the trade deficit peaked in 1996 at \$10.334 billion. In 1997, the deficit narrowed by 24 per cent, the Central Bureau of Statistics said.

Merchandise exports grew by about \$400 million last year, but the bureau said the pace of export growth slowed from about eight per cent in 1997, 7.5 per cent in 1996 and 11.5 per cent in 1995.

Merchandise imports were down for the second year in a row, following a three per cent decline in 1997.

"The decline in merchandise imports and the slowdown in the pace of export growth was influenced mainly by reduced trade in diamonds and a further fall in (all import) prices," the bureau said.

It said imports of rough diamonds fell 19.7 per cent for the year but did not provide a dollar figure. The bureau said exports of polished and unpolished diamonds dropped 14.7 per cent to \$4.35 billion.

On a quantity basis, Israeli merchandise exports rose more sharply, by 11 per cent in 1998, while imports showed a four per cent rise.

The bureau said trade figures for the last months of 1998 — excluding diamonds, transport items and fuel — showed imports rising at an annual rate of 6.7 per cent since August. Exports in the final quarter were growing at a 5.6 per cent clip.

Exports of manufactured goods and computer software rose 7.6 per cent in 1998 to \$15.97 billion, slowing from a 10 per cent rise in 1997 and an eight per cent rise in 1996. The bureau said high technology exports rose between 12 and 26 per cent, depending on the category.

Agricultural exports rose 2.9 per cent to \$825.0 million, slowing from a nine per cent rise in 1997.

Exchange Rates Monday, 11-01-99 ACCESS 4848888

CURRENCY	UNIT	1 US DOLLAR	1 EURO	1 JORDAN DINAR	1 NEW ISRAELI SHEQEL
JORDAN DINAR	1,000	0.1888	0.1257	1.8778	1.8389
SAUDI RIYAL	2,556	1.0000	0.6366	9.9456	9.7400
BAHRAIN DINAR	5.1851	0.9798	0.6366	9.7422	9.5405
QATAR RIYAL	0.5325	0.1005	0.0652	1.0000	0.9793
OMAN RIYAL	0.5325	0.1005	0.0652	1.0000	0.9793
KUWAIT DINAR	0.4262	0.0805	0.0521	0.8003	0.7837
EGYPT POUND	4.8145	0.0090	0.0058	0.0407	0.0395
LIBANON LIRA	21,4831	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
INDONESIAN RUPIAH	1,4124	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
THAI BATH	0.8112	0.1825	0.1160	1.6171	1.5838
NEW ZEALAND DOLLAR	2.3823	0.4268	0.2752	4.4735	4.3809
SWITZERLAND FRAN	1.9872	0.3714	0.2392	3.6840	3.6176
FRANCE FRANC	7.9904	1.5088	0.9541	15.0042	14.6936
GERMANY MARK	1.5531	0.2832	0.1804	2.9184	2.8550
HOLLAND GUILDER	2.2843	0.4458	0.2832	4.5305	4.4362
ITALY LIRA	11,7702	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
SPAIN PESSETA	33,5664	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
PORTUGAL ESCUDO	48,9082	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
AUSTRALIA DOLLAR	2,2243	0.4199	0.2692	4.1788	4.0933
FINLAND MARKKA	5,9474	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
GREEK DRACHMA	193,626	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
CYPRUS POUND	16,6780	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
AUSTRIA SCHILLING	2,1376	0.4036	0.2542	4.0139	3.9308
CANADA DOLLAR	1,2181	0.2300	0.1458	2.2874	2.2400
EURO					

CURRENCY	UNIT	1 US DOLLAR	1 EURO	1 JORDAN DINAR	1 NEW ISRAELI SHEQEL
US DOLLAR	1,000	1.0000	0.9369	0.7180	0.7088
EURO	1,000	1.0000	0.9369	0.7180	0.7088
JORDAN DINAR	1,000	0.5405	0.5038	1.0000	0.9800
NEW ISRAELI SHEQEL	1,000	0.5405	0.5038	0.9800	1.0000
SAUDI RIYAL	1,000	0.3937	0.3678	0.2854	0.2785
BAHRAIN DINAR	1,000	0.3937	0.3678	0.2854	0.2785
QATAR RIYAL	1,000	0.3937	0.3678	0.2854	0.2785
OMAN RIYAL	1,000	0.3937	0.3678	0.2854	0.2785
KUWAIT DINAR	1,000	0.3937	0.3678	0.2854	0.2785
EGYPT POUND	1,000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
LIBANON LIRA	1,000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
INDONESIAN RUPIAH	1,000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
THAI BATH	1,000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
NEW ZEALAND DOLLAR	1,000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
SWITZERLAND FRAN	1,000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
FRANCE FRANC	1,000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
GERMANY MARK	1,000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
HOLLAND GUILDER	1,000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
ITALY LIRA	1,000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
SPAIN PESSETA	1,000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
PORTUGAL ESCUDO	1,000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
AUSTRALIA DOLLAR	1,000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
FINLAND MARKKA	1,000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
GREEK DRACHMA	1,000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
CYPRUS POUND	1,000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
AUSTRIA SCHILLING	1,000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
CANADA DOLLAR	1,000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
EURO	1,000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000

MAJOR CURRENCIES AGAINST JORDAN DINAR

NOTE: NEITHER ACCESS NOR THE PUBLISHER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY ERRORS OR OMISSIONS

DEPOSIT INTEREST RATES

CURRENCY	1 M	3 M	6 M	1 YEAR
US DOLLAR	5.0000	4.5000	4.1000	4.1000
EURO	5.0000	4.5000	4.1000	4.1000
JORDAN DINAR	5.0000	4.5000	4.1000	4.1000
NEW ISRAELI SHEQEL	5.0000	4.5000	4.1000	4.1000

CENTRAL BANK BULLETIN

CURRENCY

CURRENCY	1 M	3 M	6 M	1 YEAR
US DOLLAR	5.0000	4.5000	4.1000	4.1000
EURO	5.0000	4.5000	4.1000	4.1000
JORDAN DINAR	5.0000	4.5000	4.1000	4.1000
NEW ISRAELI SHEQEL	5.0000	4.5000	4.1000	4.1000

## Rouble hits new low

MOSCOW (AFP) — The rouble suffered another heavy blow against the dollar Monday as Russia added new restrictions to currency trading in the hope of pumping fresh life into the sagging unit.

The Russian currency shed almost three per cent Monday to set its third successive record low, changing hands at 23.06 to the greenback.

The rouble has given up 10.45 per cent of its value in only three trading sessions this year. That fall caps a 70 per cent nose-dive that followed the Central Bank's decision to unhook the unit from its dollar peg last August.

Besides making life more expensive for Russians struggling to survive the nation's devastating economic collapse, the sinking rouble exchange rate may also prove a huge headache for the government.

Russia has pencilled in a

21.5 exchange figure into its 1999 draft budget, a rate that was surpassed on the first working day of the year.

Currency traders add that every notch lower the rouble falls marks a step closer to a default by Russia on foreign debt, put at some \$150 billion.

"In a bid to prop up the rouble Moscow on Sunday introduced tough new currency trading regulations that force Russian exporters to sell 25 per cent of their hard currency earnings directly to the central bank."

This comes on top of an existing requirement for exporters to sell 50 per cent of their profits at a special morning trading session on the Moscow Interbank Currency Exchange.

The government has also slashed the time exporters have to sell their foreign currency earnings from 14 days to seven.

lion payment that came due last month.

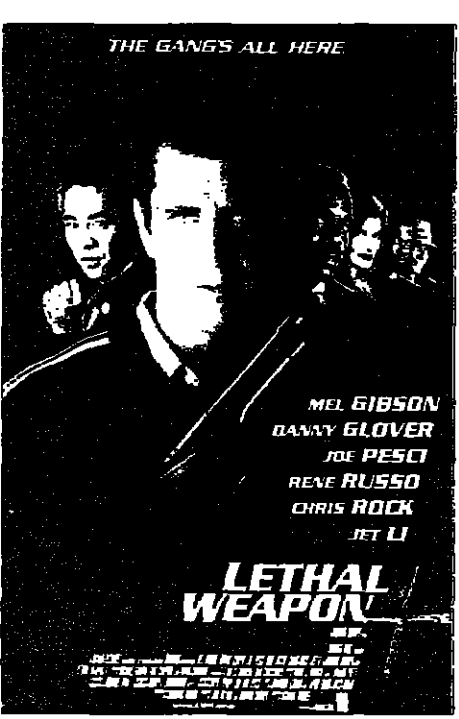
A default declaration would make Russia into a pariah state in world financial circles and Moscow is furiously struggling to scratch its way out from the devastating economic sinkhole.

In a bid to prop up the rouble Moscow on Sunday introduced tough new currency trading regulations that force Russian exporters to sell 25 per cent of their hard currency earnings directly to the central bank."

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## Bankruptcies in Britain rise 6.2%

LONDON (AFP) — The number of corporate bankruptcies in England and Wales rose 6.2 per cent last year, the first increase since the end of the last British recession in 1992, financial analysis firm Dun and Bradstreet has announced.

The firm said there were 38,634 bankruptcies in 1998, 2,266 more than in 1997. Its study did not include Scotland or Northern Ireland.

The effects of Asia's financial and economic crisis and the decline of export competitiveness because of the strong pound were cited for most of the business failures. Dun and Bradstreet said.

THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

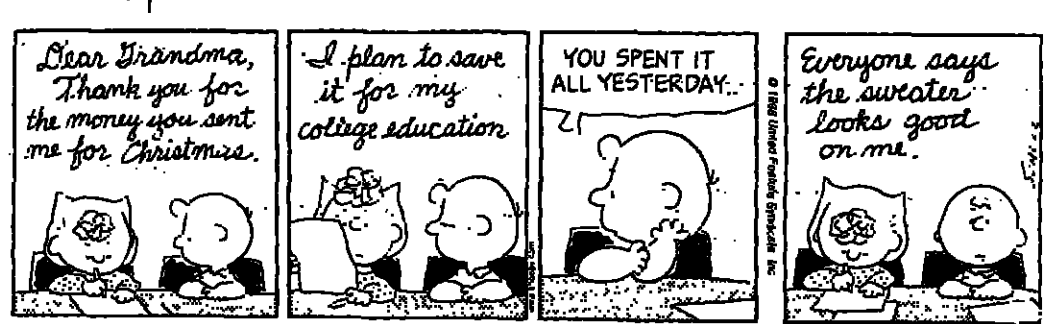
ACROSS

- Area of a church
- Hawks' opponents
- Actual event
- Fast time
- Slur over
- Maltese currency
- Public name for Ireland
- Pay a call
- Poetic offerings
- Second to none
- Abandon the truth
- Villainous
- Thingamajig
- Rice source
- Annoyed
- Spinnaker, e.g.
- Northern
- Scandinavian
- Gloacchino
- Rossini opera
- Louvre
- Mid-month
- Vegetable for stews
- Emulate eagles
- Implores
- Selling
- Painting and sculpture
- Barely escape
- Trojan War hero
- Stringed instruments
- Verve
- African antelope
- Show host
- Arsenal cache
- Singapore
- Denoted
- Bugle call

DOWN

- Guinness of "Star Wars"
- Liam Neeson
- Tizzy
- Sicilian volcano
- Completely lacking
- Marlini garish
- Gripping tool
- Correct copy
- Eve's youngest
- Botanist's
- Assistants
- High point
- Delectable
- Cutting edge
- Claim to a share
- Gumbo
- Ingredient
- Liability
- Not so risky
- Serpent's warning
- Pale or ginger
- Soft drink
- Merchandise category
- Initiate (among other things)
- Troops
- Ballpoints
- Grande
- Electrical measure
- Of Cortez
- Lock in the dials
- Military hat
- Sailed Acadian
- Dodge
- Means of connection
- Quaking tree
- Science subj.
- Hobble
- Killer whale
- Miami team
- Ala
- "Kazakhstan"
- Improwise on the piano
- Adam's grandson

Peanuts



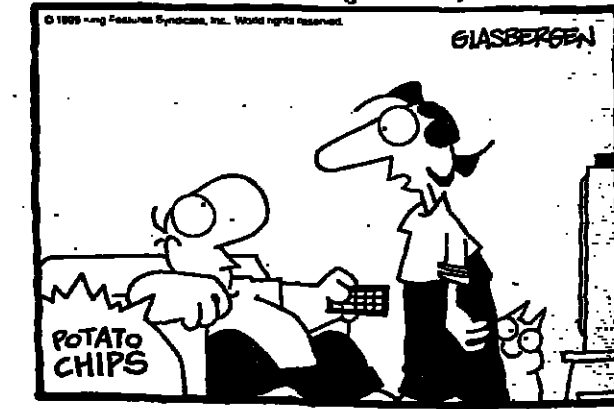
Andy Capp



Mutt'n' Jeff



THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



"If I die before you, do you promise to notice?"

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four jumbles, to form four ordinary words.

WYDON

CANEP

OWVEEL

NERRED

Answer: AN

Yesterday's

Jumbles: PIVOT JUICY INTENT TRIBAL

Answer: Suffered by a bar patron with a sore elbow — A PAIN IN THE JOINT

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

by Henri Arnold and Mike Anglin

This used to be so easy

Want my glasses?

THREADING A NEEDLE CAN BE THIS.

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)

HORI

FORECAST FOR J

B. Linn C. Buck

ARE

TAUR

GEVINE

CAMER

SCORPIO

AGITARIUS

LIBRA

CAPRICORN

DECEMBER

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# Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

## Activity rises at port of Aqaba

**\*\* THE VOLUME** of goods handled at the port of Aqaba amounted to 12.6 million tonnes in 1998, three per cent higher than the 12.3 million tonnes handled in 1997. Ports Corporation Director General Mohammad Dalabeh indicated that the volume of imports handled during last year was 5,333,736 tonnes, a 12 per cent rise over the 4,778,310 tonnes handled during 1997.

Dalabeh attributed the increase to handling higher volumes of grains, steel, ammonia and sulphur. Grain imports went up from 1.6 million tonnes in 1997 to two million tonnes in 1998 and steel imports from 363,808 tonnes in 1997 to 449,616 tonnes in 1998. Imports of ammonia and sulphur rose from 614,904 tonnes in 1997 to 878,770 in 1998.

The port chief indicated that there was a rise also in the number of trucks which increased by seven per cent from 219,578 trucks in 1997 to 234,824 trucks in 1998. This lifted the volume of tonnes loaded from 4,499,425 million in 1997 to 5,121,176 tonnes last year, or by 621,751 tonnes that represent an increase of 14 per cent.

Dalabeh concluded that the number of general vessels and cargo ships also rose by one per cent from 1,445 in 1997 to 1,458 in 1998 (Al Ra'i).

## Incoming transfers from expatriates exceed outgoing transfers by seven-fold

**\*\* ACCORDING TO** latest official statistics, incoming transfers from Jordanian expatriates are seven-fold the amount of outgoing transfers from foreign labour working in the Kingdom. The statistics showed that the inflow of transfers amounted to JD506.7 million during the first six months of last year. The amount was JD226.8 million during the first quarter and JD239.9 million during the second quarter of 1998. The total inflow of expatriate remittances amounted to JD1.17 billion during the whole of 1997.

During the first six months of last year, foreign labour in Jordan transferred abroad a total of JD72.3 million of which JD36.9 million were remitted during the first quarter and JD35.4 million during the second quarter. A total of JD141.8 million was transferred by "guest workers" in Jordan during the whole of 1997.

The statistics showed that there continues to be a balance between the number of persons arriving and departing the country. During the first ten months of last year a total of 3.95 million arrived in Jordan while the number of those departing was 3.97 million during the same period.

In 1997, 1996 and 1995 the number of arrivals was 4.27 million, 4.27 million and 4.38 million respectively while the number of persons departing was 4.11 million, 4.18 million and 4.34 million respectively (Al Arab Al Yawm).

# BAT, Rothmans International merge

LONDON (AFP) — British American Tobacco (BAT) and Rothmans International Monday unveiled plans to create an international tobacco giant with 16 per cent of the global market for cigarettes through a merger dominated by BAT.

The deal, which comes as the industry faces costly legal battles in the most developed markets and reduced demand because of the global economic slowdown, aims at increasing sales in developing markets in Asia and Latin America.

"We will be the clear market leader in the developing world, where most of the future growth is expected," BAT chairman Martin Broughton said.

The deal aims to bring the BAT brands Lucky Strike, State Express 555, Benson and Hedges, Kent, Players and Pall Mall under the same roof as the Rothmans brands, Dunhill, Rothmans, Peter Stuyvesant and Winfield.

Such a move, the companies said in a statement, would secure annual cost savings of 250 million pounds in three years' time after a one-off payment of 400 million pounds.

Broughton, said in a statement: "This merger represents a major step forward in the achievement of our vision to become the world's leading international tobacco company."

Rothmans is at present a subsidiary of the Swiss Compagnie Financiere Richemont. One third of the company is owned by the Rembrandt Group of South Africa.

Johann Rupert, chief executive of Richemont and chairman of Rembrandt, said: "The long term interests of the Rothmans Group are best served by being part of a larger tobacco business which will have enhanced market positions and greater scale of operations."

A BAT spokesman conceded that the deal came at a difficult time for the international tobacco industry.

"It has both defensive characteristics and indeed more positive ones. If there is a recession around the world, the defensive opportunities for cost saving will still be there but when growth returns we'll benefit from the shift to premium and international brands," he said.

The companies said that "conditions in Asia remain very difficult" but added that the deal would produce greater importance "in the faster growing emerging markets."

Late last year, BAT agreed to pay \$430 million to settle Medicaid tobacco litigation suits in 46 U.S. states. The company said that this charge might rise to \$750 million in total.

The spokesman said that job losses would contribute to the merged group's cost savings.

"Clearly there will sadly be job losses around the world but it is too early to speculate on exactly where those are going to be," he said.

The new tobacco giant will be formed by an issue of shares by BAT. It is due to take effect in the second quarter of this year, pending regulatory clearance.

"Probably the most significant regulator is the European Union," BAT said, given its modest sales in Britain and Rothmans' limited sales in the United States.

In 1997 BAT and Rothmans made 900 billion cigarettes accounting for 16 per cent of the global market, they said.

The board of the group will be faced with heavyweight British public figures including former finance minister Kenneth Clarke, who will be the deputy chairman, and Rupert Pennant-Rea, the former deputy governor of the Bank of England, a non-executive director.

Former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher joined Rothmans after she was voted out of office as prime minister by the then governing Conservative Party in 1990.

## British Post Office buys German Parcel in first big foreign acquisition

LONDON (AFP) — The British Post Office said Monday that it has agreed to buy German Parcel, the third largest private carrier in Germany, under a new regime of commercial freedom announced by the government last month.

Post Office chairman Neville Bain said in a statement: "An acquisition of this kind is a key first step in our strategy of becoming one of the top global distribution companies."

John Roberts, the chief executive, said that the deal was "the first tangible outcome of the commercial freedoms announced for the post office."

In December, the then trade and industry secretary announced greater commercial liberty for the Post Office, which is state-owned and has a monopoly on basic mail, but said that full privatisation was "unrealistic."

Roberts told a London press conference said that the German purchase "will allow us to develop overseas markets to take up the challenges of postal liberalisation."

This major international acquisition shows the commitment of the government and the Post Office to move quickly to implement the radical package of reforms announced last December," said recently appointed Secretary of State for Trade and Industry Stephen Byers.

German Parcel, which has annual sales of 350 million euros (\$400 million), also comes with a 23 per cent stake in General Parcel, an international company with services in 30 European countries, vastly enhancing the British Post Office's distribution network.

The Post Office would not reveal the price it paid for the private company.

The Post Office is one of the few remaining nationalised businesses in Britain and faces, along with its counterparts in other European countries, increasing pressure to adapt to the growing deregulation of the monopoly system.

"If you don't allow us to make these moves, then there won't be any moves left to make," Roberts said.

German Parcel, based in Neuenstein, north of Frankfurt, has 4,500 employees, a fleet of 4,000 vehicles and handles about 100 million parcels a year. It has an 11 per cent growth rate, the Post Office said.

The Post Office said its new subsidiary will keep its name and its German management. No jobs are expected to be lost.

## A.F.M. TRADE Monday, 11-01-99

Company	Open	Close	Change
<b>BANKS</b>			
ARAB BK	218,000	216,000	-0.92%
NTL BK	1,560	1,560	0.00%
BL OF JO	1,230	1,230	0.00%
THE HOUSING BK	2,800	2,750	-1.78%
JO. KUWAIT BK	1,650	1,640	-0.61%
JO. GULF BK	0,700	0,670	-4.29%
JO. ISLAMIC BK	1,680	1,660	-1.19%
SBIT ISLAM	0,670	0,680	+1.49%
PHILADELPHIA BK	0,550	0,550	0.00%
<b>BANKS INDEX</b>	282,230		point = -0.97%
<b>INSURANCE</b>			
JO. FRENCH INS	2,700	2,700	0.00%
AHLIA INS	1,110	1,170	+5.41%
<b>INSURANCE INDEX</b>	126,430		point = +0.27%
<b>SERVICES</b>			
ELECTRIC POWER	1,750	1,700	-2.86%
IRRID. ELECTRICITY	1,620	1,680	+3.70%
PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	0,680	0,730	+7.35%
JO. UTIL. TRADING CENT	0,680	0,680	0.00%
AL-RAT	5,400	5,400	0.00%
COMMOORE	1,130	1,100	-2.65%
AL-ZARGA FOR EDU	0,880	0,900	+2.27%
ARAB INTL. FOR INVS. & E	1,940	1,950	+0.52%
JO. INVS. HOLDING	0,890	0,930	+4.49%
UNIFIED LAND TRANS	1,150	1,150	0.00%
<b>SERVICES INDEX</b>	110,850		point = -0.49%
<b>INDUSTRY</b>			
CEMENT	3,720	3,550	-4.57%
PHOSPHATE	1,680	1,680	0.00%
ARAB POTASH	3,240	3,220	-0.62%
PETROLEUM REFINERY	10,550	10,570	+0.19%
THE IND. COMM. & AGRICULT	1,090	1,060	-2.75%
WORSTED MILLS	6,720	6,380	-5.06%
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL	2,910	2,830	-2.75%
CHLORINE IND	1,120	1,120	0.00%
TOBACCO & CIGARET	1,220	1,210	-0.82%
RAPIA	0,530	0,530	0.00%
DAR AL DAWA	5,350	5,150	-3.74%
MIDDLE EAST COMPLEX	0,570	0,550	-3.51%
JO. STEEL	0,980	0,980	0.00%
ARAB ALUMINIUM	1,900	1,850	-2.63%
ARAB CENTER FOR PHARM	1,240	1,240	0.00%
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	0,400	0,390	-2.50%
PETRO - CHEMICAL	0,330	0,320	-3.03%
CHEMICAL & VEGETABLE	0,900	0,850	-5.56%
ROCKWOOL	0,290	0,290	0.00%
UNIVERSAL CHEMICAL	1,080	1,020	-5.56%
SULPHO - CHEMICALS	0,380	0,380	0.00%
ARAB CENTER FOR PHARM	1,240	1,240	0.00%
UNIVERSAL MODERN IND	0,660	0,650	-1.52%
IND. RESOURCES	0,450	0,440	-2.22%
NTL ALUMINIUM	0,780	0,690	-11.43%
<b>INDUSTRY INDEX</b>	83,920		point = -1.99%

## HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR JANUARY, TUESDAY 12, 1999

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

**ARIES:** (March 21 to April 19) Better to listen than talk today if you want to win the game you're playing. You'd rather just punch people in the nose than figure out a way to trick them, but today you'd be wise to move slowly. If you do, the other people may tip their hands and give you an advantage you hadn't expected.

**TAURUS:** (April 20 to May 20) Looks like there's something important you and your mate want for your home, but you have different ideas about how it should look, where it should go and how much it should cost. Of course it should cost as little as possible, and the exercise you're going through now will facilitate that. Talk it out thoroughly before you go shopping.

**GEMINI:** (May 21 to June 21) You'll be wise to keep your mouth shut and your eyes open today. There's something and dealing going on, and you might find yourself right in the middle of it. You're a good negotiator, but somebody else is even more shrewd than you are, and that's how you can learn. Just pay attention, and don't say much.

**CANCER:** (June 22 to July 21) You'll get a pretty strong urge today, and you probably ought to follow it. The time for consideration is just about over, and we're coming up on the time for action. You'll know when this happens. It'll be like the tide is pulling you out to sea. Better have your boat securely underneath you, with plenty of provisions on board.

**LEO:** (July 22 to August 21) You'll probably wish you could sleep in today. The foggy feeling should clear up later, so don't despair. It's just that you have some decisions to make, and you're rather not. If you don't make the decisions, somebody else will, and things could turn out a little different than what you had in mind. Stay involved.

**VIRGO:** (August 22 to September 22) A problem at home needs your attention. Maybe the decorations need to come down so you can whip your place into shape, but you don't necessarily want to go back to the way it was. Instead, you'd like to something new. But what? Something that's a little better, but not much money, is your best option.

**LIBRA:** (September 23 to October 22) Invest in your own education. This could be expensive initially, but the results should pay off soon. You know what skills you need. It's just a question of getting them. Speed things up by asking a tutor to help. It's easier for you to learn when you have somebody else to tell you how it's supposed to be done.

**SCORPIO:** (October 23 to November 21) You're still powerful today, but you don't have a moment to. Everything is transitory, even your charisma. Get all your plans thing in place so everyone thinks it's a done. Work out the whole scheme so it can't fail, and you won't have trouble getting financial backing. You're the expert at making things happen, and this is how you do it.

**SAGITTARIUS:** (November 22 to December 21) Hurry and make the decisions you've been postponing. You might have decided to be indecisive. That way somebody else gets to make your choices for you. That's not such a good idea. Make your opinions known, or things could go in quite a different direction than the one you'd intended.

**CAPRICORN:** (December 22 to January 20) It'll be easier to get from here to there if you take a roundabout route. First, figure out exactly what you want to accomplish. Don't be put off by the fact that it's impossible. Some people say the impossible just takes longer, but that's not even true for you. If you're like most Capricorns, somebody else's "impossible" is your "ho hum."

**AQUARIUS:** (January 21 to February 19) Hold firm to your position and you'll win out. The opposition you've been encountering is growing weaker. Don't just shrug off criticism of your work actions. Instead, put in the corrections as quickly as you can. That will turn a person who was arguing against you into a firm supporter.

**PISCES:** (February 20 to March 20) Somebody you've been thinking about for ages is thinking about you, too. If there's someone you haven't been speaking to, why don't you just bury the hatchet? Whatever you were angry about can't really matter anymore. If it's easier, make contact through a mutual friend. Somebody nearby has been waiting for the opportunity to do just that.

Birthstone of January: Garnet — Rose Quartz

## Israel demands say in any Potash-Israel Corp deal

TEL AVIV (Reuters) — The Israeli government has informed Canada's Potash Corp. of Saskatchewan (PCS) that it needs official approval to acquire control of Israel Corp, an industry source said on Monday.

The government made its position known in a letter sent on Sunday to Yehuda Raveh, the Canadian company's attorney in Israel.

Doron Cohen, the head of the Israeli Government Corporations Authority, said in the letter that acquiring control of the Israel Corp would be tantamount to buying control of Israel Chemicals Ltd, in which the state holds a golden share.

Israel Corp chairman Erwin Eisenberg and PCS said on Sunday the Eisenberg family was in talks to sell its controlling stake in the Israel Corp to PCS.

The Israel Corp controls 52 per cent of Israel Chemicals, which under a recent change in Israel Chemicals' charter gives it effective control over naming the entire board of Israel Chemicals.

"The letter calls attention to the fact that the purchase of shares in Israel Corp is subject to the rights of the state as the state has a special share," said the source, who asked not to be identified.

Israel Chemicals was founded and until recently controlled by the Israeli government. It has exclusive use of the Israeli mineral resources of the Dead Sea.

Its Dead Sea Works subsidiary produces potash and has a joint magnesium venture with Volkswagen AG.

Another subsidiary, Dead Sea Bromine, is the world's largest producer of bromine compounds.

The Eisenberg family currently controls 53.3 per cent of the capital and 56.0 per cent of the voting rights in the Israel Corp, one of the country's biggest holding companies.

Israel Corp's other holdings include, in joint ventures with the government, a 26 per cent stake in Oil Refineries Ltd and a 50 per cent stake in Zim Israel Navigation.

## JORDAN MARKETPLACE \*\*\* JORDAN MARKETPLACE \*\*\* JORDAN MARKETPLACE

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## Samaranch 'injured' but not bowed, says IOC member

SYDNEY (AP) — International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Juan Antonio Samaranch has been "injured" by the IOC's corruption crisis but will fight for a resolution, according to a fellow member.

Australian IOC member Phil Coles said Samaranch was "mortified and very hurt" by the results of investigations into Salt Lake City's bid to host the 2002 Winter Games.

But he said the claims against IOC members were not enough reason for Samaranch to step down.

"There have been rumours (of corruption) around for some time, but nothing to ever lay a finger on," Coles told Australian Broadcasting Corp. radio Monday.

"While I think he's been injured by this and he's very, very disturbed, he'll fight on. The IOC knew of

rumours, but knew nothing about bribes."

Coles said he had not heard before of the claim that prostitutes were offered to IOC delegates, as was reported over the weekend.

"You're asking me something that has been alleged, I'd never heard of it before," Coles said. "It was certainly never inferred about that from anyone that I'm in contact with."

Coles suggested that officials in Salt Lake City might be trying to protect themselves by making untrue statements.

"It seems strange to me that these leaks are coming out of Salt Lake City — it seems as though someone is trying to damage the IOC to save their own skin," Coles said.

He said he did not think the 2000 Sydney Olympics would be damaged

by the allegations emerging from Salt Lake City.

"The only problem for Sydney is that the pressure is going to come on us to make sure that we do perform and that Sydney puts on a show which in effect rescues and rehabilitates the Olympic movement," Coles said.

Salt Lake City Games organizing committee member Ken Bullock told ABC radio that Samaranch should resign, describing the bribery scandal as reprehensible.

"He needs to set the example for the world to see that the IOC will clean its own house and follow the same example as (organising committee chief) Frank Joklik did," Bullock said.



Germans Jutta Kleinschmidt and Yina Thorner drive through a village during the special leg Bobo Dioulasso (Burkina Faso) - Mopti (Mali) in the ninth stage of the Grenada-Dakar rally (AFP photo)

## China starts mass blood tests for drug cheats

BEIJING (AFP) — China has introduced mass blood testing for sports drug cheats at its National Winter Games in the northern city of Changchun.

Officials said almost a third of the 646 athletes at the Games, which started Sunday, are to undergo the tests which have been rejected by the Olympics and most other major international sports events as too costly. There is also an ethical debate over their use.

"We will adopt a new method of the blood test against doping offences in the short track speed skating, cross-country and biathlon at the games," Zhu Chengyi, deputy general secretary of the games organising committee, told a press conference on Monday.

"More than 200 athletes will go through the blood tests during the games," Zhu said.

"And 151 samples have been tested prior to the games, which features a total of 646 athletes, with no positive results found."

China's sports authorities have sought to reassure the world that they have clamped down on drug-taking since a series of embarrassing doping scandals in recent years.

Seven top swimmers were among 11 Chinese to fail drug tests at the Asian Games in Hiroshima. Last year, one Chinese swimmer was caught trying to implant human growth hormones into Australia for the world championships, and four others were disqualified during the event.

The Chinese Olympic Committee (COC), which has launched a bid for the 2008 Olympics, insists the country now has one of the toughest anti-drug regimes in the world. And this has been taken up as a theme at the winter games.

"We have come to a pre-tournament agreement with every delegation for a strict control of medicines and foods, and received promises from athletes not to use any performance-enhancing drugs, including some controversial substances such as marijuana," Zhu said.

The International Olympic Committee has shied away from blood tests because of fears of legal action.

"Traditional tests have been based on urine samples. Some experts have said the pin-prick needed for a blood test could be used against the sports authorities for an assault action."

## Sydney International Corretja, Coetzer, Krajicek advance

SYDNEY (AP) — World No.3 Alex Corretja conquered his usual early-season snooze Monday to make a winning start to the new year before showing improved commitment with a half-hour run in sapping heat.

Corretja, one of several players in with a chance of reaching the No.1 spot at next week's Australian Open, beat German qualifier Hendrik Dreekmann 4-6, 6-3, 6-3 in their first round match at the Sydney International at White City.

Corretja had the best year of his career in 1998, but it started with a first round-loss to Dreekmann at this tournament.

After taking almost two hours to prevail in temperatures pushing into the high 30s (90s F), Corretja was ordered to run around a nearby park by his fit-



Alex Corretja

Corretja the match with a weak backhand low into the net.

After his poor start to 1998, Corretja won five titles and reached the French Open final where he lost to compatriot Carlos Moya. He also won the biggest of his 12 career titles when he claimed the end of season ATP World Championship in Hannover, avenging his French Open loss to Moya.

Corretja joins Marcelo Rios and Pat Rafter with a realistic chance of reaching the summit this month. Moya and Andre Agassi are also in the frame.

"I don't think about it," Corretja said, of the top spot. "I just try to play my best — it would be unbelievable for me to reach the No.1 but I'll have to go step by step and day by day."

Corretja will meet Marc Rosser in the second round after the Swiss player cruised to a 6-4, 6-0 win over Czech Bohdan Ulihrach.

Jan-Michael Gambill, of Spokane, Washington, swept past Australian Sandon Stolle in the third set to win their clash 7-6 (9-7), 2-6, 6-1, setting up a second round match against Albert Costa of Spain. Costa beat Paul Haarhuis of the Netherlands 6-2, 6-4.

Former Wimbledon champion Richard Krajicek got an easy passage through to round two. The sixth-seeded Dutchman led Jerome Golmard 6-4, 4-0 when the Frenchman withdrew suffering an ankle injury.

Dominique Van Roost, the women's eighth seed, had an even easier time of her match against Irina Spirlea, leading 6-1 when the Romanian withdrew because of illness.

Amanda Coetzer, of South Africa, overwhelmed Croatian youngster Mirjana Lucic 6-4, 3-6, 6-0 while No.7 seed Patty Schnyder of Switzerland beat Sandrine Testud of France 6-3, 3-6, 6-2.

The tournament features eight of the top 16 men and 17 of the leading 20 women.

Among those in action on center court Tuesday are U.S. Open champion Pat Rafter, Anna Kournikova and Steffi Graf.



Amanda Coetzer

ness trainer Salva Sosa. Corretja admitted that in previous years he has shown as much power off the grid as a Volkswagen Beetle.

"This time I feel better and mentally I'm more confident," Corretja said. "This time I going to try and put the turbo on earlier."

Corretja has never been past the third round in three attempts at the Australian Open, but a victory this time could get him into the top spot with Pete Sampras missing through injury.

He says he has prepared better for the start of the season, but it was impor-

tant to get into the right rhythm.

"That's why I went running after the match," Corretja said.

"I have to try to practice hard, try to be honest. Sometimes you think you are No.3 in the world and you don't have to fight anymore."

Dreekmann looked

capable of another upset when he claimed the opening set but from there Corretja knuckled down and found his range.

He got a break in the fourth game of the second set and broke to love in the fifth game of the decider. Dreekmann folded to love again in the ninth when he handed



## Misconduct claims could destroy Games support in Mormon community

SALT LAKE CITY (AFP) — Accusations that 2002 Olympic organisers paid for sexual favors for International Olympic Committee members could destroy this Mormon community's support for the Games.

Deeda Seed, a city councilwoman, warned that, if proven true, the charges might well be the final insult to a devout area with conservative religious values, the heart of the Mormon church.

"The people of our community would be so horrified by that they may not want to have anything to do with the Olympics ever again," Seed told The New York Times.

That would be a stunning setback for organisers, who must count upon the goodwill of nearly 30,000 volunteers between now and the 2002 Winter Games, which IOC officials vow will not be moved from here.

"It's quite appalling. It goes against all the values of this community," Seed said. "What's unfolding here is the people who were working to secure the Olympics for Salt Lake City would stop at nothing."

"They would sell out every value this community holds dear. That is so unacceptable and so horrifying. We will have to deal with the consequences for years."

The bribery scandal has already forced two top executives of the 2002 Games organising committee to resign, with an IOC probe expected to force resignations from that body before the end of the month.

Direct cash payments of as much as \$70,000 were made to IOC officials, who also received scholarships for relatives, free health care and lavish gifts from organisers in order to beat rival bidders.

In that atmosphere, it has become easy for Utah taxpayers who have financed the bid to believe their money went so IOC members could have sexual dalliances.

"This creates an enormous crisis for the Mormon church," said Stephen Pace, the leader of a Games watchdog group called Utahans for Responsible Public Spending.

Dick Pound, a Canadian IOC member known for dealing with all-important television sponsors, said an IOC probe has not raised the issue of sexual favours.

"They can't even get their own dates? If it happened, it will all come out," Pound said.

Taxpayers fear diminished corporate support for the Games' 1.45-billion-dollar budget will result in the area being saddled with financial losses after its money was squandered on the IOC elite.

"The whole notion of this being a private venture is just a charade," said Ken Bullock, the Salt Lake organising committee member who has called for the resignation of IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch.

A Salt Lake Tribune newspaper report Sunday said organisers underreported the amount of public support when reporting budget figures to tax officials, which could widen the U.S. Justice Department probe of the scandal.

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	Mel Gibson Michael ... in <b>LETHAL WEAPON</b> Shows: 6:15, 8:30, 10:45	<b>MULAN</b> Shows: 12:15, 2:15, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	Comedian Mohammad Humeidi ... in <b>SAEEDI AT THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY</b> Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	Steven Segall ... in <b>FIRE DOWN BELOW</b> Shows: 12:15, 2:15, 6:15, 8:15 Al Pacino & Robert De Niro ... in <b>HEAT</b> Show: 10:15	ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria Ahmad Zaki & Layla Elwi ... in <b>EDHAK, ES SOURA TETLA' HELWEH</b> Shows: 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria Dustin Hoffman & John Travolta ... in <b>MAD CITY</b> Shows: 6:15, 8:30, 10:45	

Listings for films and showing times as received by cinemas and their advertising agencies.





Rainer Schuttler of Germany holds the golden trophy after winning the Qatar Tennis Open final against Tim Henman of England in Doha. Schuttler won, 6-4, 5-7, 6-1 (AFP photo)

## Qatar Open Schuttler upsets Henman's title bid

DOHA (AFP) — German qualifier Rainer Schuttler notched up the first ATP title of his career here Sunday when he defeated top-seed Tim Henman 6-4, 5-7, 6-1 to win the ATP's \$1 million Doha Open.

Schuttler, ranked a modest 111th in the rankings, completed his glory week with a 6-4, 5-7, 6-1 victory. "I can't believe it," said the 22-year-old German after his win.

"When I came here I just hoped I would qualify for the main draw. I got through my opening matches and then just kept on winning," Schuttler said.

Before his triumph against Henman, Schuttler had beaten Ukraine's Andrei Medvedev, Czech Republic's Daniel Vacek, fourth-seeded Goran Ivanisevic of Croatia and France's former Wimbledon finalist Cedric Pioline.

Henman, who started slowly by dropping his opening service game and who lost the first set, appeared to be back in control when he snatched a hard-fought second set.

But in the third there was nothing he could do against an opponent who was spraying winners from all angles. The 24-year-old Henman, who had been hoping to win his fifth career title, paid a warm tribute to Schuttler.

"He's had a great week here and played really well. Obviously this is a disappointment for me but it has been good preparation before Australia," Henman said. Henman was runner-up to Jim Courier here twelve months ago.

## SCOREBOARD

### French League Cup

Lyon	0	Montpellier	2
Nancy	1	Beauvais	0
Strasbourg	1	Troyes	4 aet
Reims	1	Marseille	1 aet

(Lens win 6-5 on penalties)

### Italian League

Cagliari	4	AS Roma	3
Empoli	1	AC Milan	1
Inter Milan	6	Venezia	2
Juventus	1	Bari	1
Parma	1	Udinese	3
Perugia	3	Parma	6
Fiorentina	1	Bologna	1
Sampdoria	1	Salernitana	0
Vicenza	1	Fiorentina	0
Lazio	2		

### NFL playoff quarterfinal

American Conference			
New York Jets	34	Jacksonville	24

### Spanish League

Mallorca	2	Real Madrid	1
Valladolid	2	Real Betis	1
Villareal	1	Real Zaragoza	1
D. La Coruna	1	Racing Santander	2
Oviedo	2	Valencia	2
Real Sociedad	4	Salamanca	0
Alaves	1	Espanyol	1
Tenerife	0	Celta Vigo	2
A. Madrid	5	Extremadura	0

### English Premiership

Man. United	4	West Ham	1
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## Chess buff, 10, makes history

LONDON (AFP) — A 10-year-old chess player was celebrating a record Monday as the youngest player in the game's history to qualify for a national championship final.

Murugan Thiruchelva, whose parents are from Sri Lanka, qualified for the British championship aged 10 years and one month, breaking the previous best by over a year, according to chess historians.

Five previous boys who qualified aged 11 have included British world title challenger Nigel Short. Last year Thiruchelva was the youngest player to draw with a grand master and to perform in competition at the level of an international master.

His mother Shanta said she often had to force him to practise chess but he loved tournaments and the atmosphere of competition. "I first taught him about chess when he was three. The day after I showed him the board he came back from the nursery and set it up himself," she said.

Thiruchelva spent Christmas playing with his new yo-yo and an electronic game, she went on. "He really is a normal boy who supports Manchester United and likes computer games — he's also good at chess."

## Redskins sold for NFL record \$700 million

WASHINGTON (AFP) — American football's Washington Redskins, considered one of the most profitable sports teams in North America, have been sold for more than \$700 million.

The deal, which also includes two-year-old Jack Kent Cooke Stadium, is expected to be completed and announced here Monday, although television and newspaper reports here said terms were agreed upon Sunday.

Only Rupert Murdoch's \$1 billion purchase of the Manchester United football club is larger among global team sports purchases.

The winners in a bidding war with half a dozen rivals were Edward and Howard Milstein, brothers in a banking family who own the National Hockey League's New York Islanders, and suburban businessman Dan Snyder.

Howard Milstein failed in a bid last year to purchase the National Football League's expansion Cleveland Browns, who went for \$530 million.

The Redskins trail only the Dallas Cowboys in NFL profitability, according to financial studies, because they have attracted sellout crowds for decades and have a new stadium to increase revenue streams.

Thousands more are on a waiting list for season tickets to the Redskins, whose loyal fans have shrugged off bad seasons and revelled in two Super Bowl titles to increase the fortune of former owner Cooke.

Cooke passed away 21 months ago after serving as majority owner for a quarter-century. Trust terms in his will made it difficult for his son John to keep the team in the family, though he did try.

The deal must still be approved by 75 per cent of the NFL's 30 other owners, a formality likely to be completed later this month in Miami when owners gather for the Super Bowl.

The sale to the Milstein group puts into doubt the future of Redskins coach Norv Turner and general manager Charley Casserly after a season in which the team started 0-7. The younger Cooke was set to keep both if he got the club.

## SPORTS IN BRIEF

### Sad start for Grobbelaar

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — Former Liverpool star Bruce Grobbelaar made a losing debut as coach of South African Premier Soccer League club Seven Stars at the weekend. Mid-table Stars from Cape Town fell 2-0 to second-placed Kaizer Chiefs at Johannesburg Stadium in a match dominated by the home team, who lie five points behind leaders Manning Rangers. The 41-year-old South African-born Grobbelaar has signed a five-month contract and succeeds British coach Jeff Butler in charge of Stars, who won promotion to the national championship last season.

### Brazilian coach signs \$600,000 deal

BEIJING (AFP) — Former Brazil coach Sebastiao Lazaroni has signed a one-year contract to take charge of Chinese powerhouses Shanghai Shenhua, sources said on Monday. "We can confirm that Mr. Lazaroni signed a one-year contract for \$600,000 just after 2 p.m. (06:00 GMT) today in Shanghai," a Shenhua team spokeswoman told AFP by phone. Although the team spokeswoman declined to give the specifics of the contract, earlier reports in the Shanghai media had indicated Lazaroni would demand as much as 1 million dollars a season. Lazaroni, 49, who coached Brazil at the 1990 World Cup finals, spent the last decade coaching teams in Italy, Mexico and Turkey. The previous two coaches of the Shanghai team — ranked number two in the league behind northeastern champs Dalian — had reported salaries of \$100,000 and \$300,000 a year. Lazaroni's arrival in Shanghai in late December last year was hailed by local fans as he brought in two new Portuguese players and introduced new training methods. The Wenhui News reported. Lazaroni had just completed a single season contract with Brazil's Gremio club prior to moving to Shanghai, the report said.

### Ancelotti Juventus' new coach

TURIN (AFP) — Carlo Ancelotti is set to replace Marcello Lippi as the coach of Italian champions Juventus next season, the club's honorary president Umberto Agnelli announced on Sunday. Agnelli, whose family own the club, ended months of speculation when he told reporters: "Ancelotti? I think he will be our new coach." Lippi is widely expected to move to Serie A rivals Inter Milan after the current season.

### Round-the-world balloon attempt postponed

ALICE SPRINGS (AFP) — Brewing thunderstorms south of here forced a last minute postponement Monday of a joint Australian-U.S. attempt to circle the world in a balloon. organizers said. "The launch for today has been aborted due to instability of wind," said mission director Dan Pedersen, about two hours before the scheduled lift off. "A thunderstorm observed near Ayers Rock has moved to the southeast and the winds are too unstable to predict in the Alice area," he said. Strong winds and rains have dogged preparations since the scheduled launch of the Team ReMax balloon on December 27. A low pressure system is expected over Alice Springs later Monday bringing showers and storms which threw any further attempt into doubt, although organizers say a Tuesday launch remains a possibility.

### Schlesser, Saint increase Dakar Rally overall leads

MOPTI, Mali (AFP) — Leader in the car section Jean-Louis Schlesser and motorcycle pacesetter Richard Sainct both increased their leads in Sunday's 725km ninth stage of the Paris-Dakar rally. France's Schlesser, and co-driver Philippe Monet, finished the stretch from Bobo Dioulasso, Burkina Faso to Mopti in Mali with a time of 3hr 43min 8sec, more than seven minutes ahead of second-placed Kenjiro Shinozuka of Japan and Henri Magne of France. Schlesser and Monet now lead Spain's Miguel Prieto and Dominique Serieys of France in the overall standings by nine minutes 25 seconds after the day's 295km of special stages. Meanwhile France's Sainct leads compatriot Thierry Magnaldi by six minutes 43 seconds overall in the motorcycling section after finishing fourth in the stage behind South Africa's winner Alfie Cox.

## Jordan's fate should be decided this week

CHICAGO (AFP) — Michael Jordan's future plans, retirement or a return to the National Basketball Association, should be known within days so that the Chicago Bulls, and the league, can plan for the new season.

The three-time reigning NBA champions are anxious for Jordan to make his plans known early this week because contract talks with free agents are already under way and the freedom to sign deals is one week away.

The Chicago Tribune has reported Jordan is smoking 10 to 15 cigars a day and is not motivated to continue the weight-training that got him into shape after his retirement ended in 1995.

But Jordan is known to love a challenge.

Winning a shortened-season title and helping the league recover from a labor fight in the eyes of fans are tasks that might be too much even for Jordan.

"He's the only one, in the short term, who can improve the league's image," said Richard Lapchick, director of Northeastern University's Center for the Study of Sport in Society.

Without five-time Most Valuable Player and 10-time scoring champion Jordan, the NBA's task of regaining the love of American sports fans becomes much more difficult.

"Without Michael Jordan, the NBA has a serious problem," said agent Leigh Steinberg.

"It's difficult to imagine one player having more impact over a league. Some polls show him as the most widely recognizable person in the world. He has so much dominance. It's not like someone is a close second."

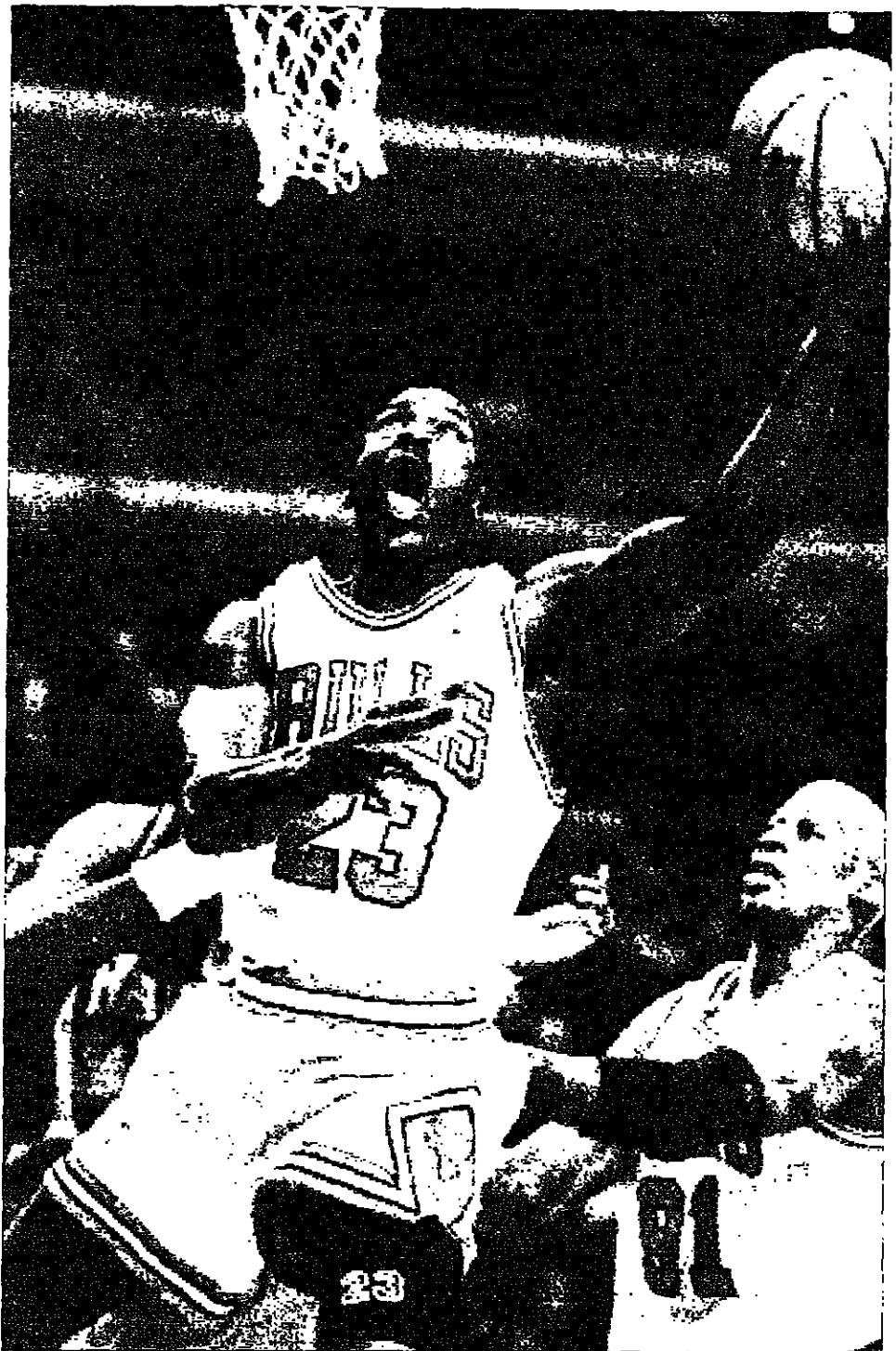
"As hard as the NBA has tried, they haven't been able to bring along a new generation of Michael Jordans. There's no heir apparent, and at the end of the day, people respond to stars."

The NBA should fear Jordan's retirement as much as rival clubs might fear his return, said University of Chicago economist Allen Sanderson.

"Michael can heal wounds," said Sanderson, a Bulls' season-ticket holder. "Jordan would be a bridge to next season and give (the NBA) another six months to make amends with fans."

But Lakers executive vice president Jerry West said it's a mistake to look upon Jordan as a savior.

"It's a terrible burden to try and put the entire league on one player's shoulders,"



Michael Jordan

West said. "The league does not revolve around Michael Jordan. I admire Michael more than anyone. But to say this league is going to sink without Michael Jordan is just not the case."

"Obviously having him here would be great because he always seems to find a way to make negative things go away."

Jordan has sold shoes, fragrances, underwear, fast food and movies. Now he would have to be the NBA's major pitchman, the name the NBA hopes to lure back fans with.

Telecasters are planning two schedules of games, depending on whether or not Jordan returns. Television executives plan to call Jordan to seek direction.

"The NBA has a vested interest in having him return because he protects their TV ratings, which ultimately affect their advertising rates," said Los Angeles

sports marketer David Carter.

Others want the chance to finally beat a man who has been nearly invincible in the 1990s.

"(Jordan) says all roads to a title go through Chicago, and I can't wait to drive a tractor through the place," New York Knicks president Dave Checketts said. "So Michael please come back. We want to beat you."

Magic Johnson, forced into retirement by the HIV virus, made abortive comeback bids and warns. "Don't do it, Michael. You're healthy. You still have a couple of good years left in you. I had no idea how hard it would be to live without basketball my first year out."

Jordan, who turns 36 next month, will have the freedom to decide that he wants someone to coach other than Tim Floyd, the choice of top Bulls executives Jerry Reinsdorf and Jerry

Krause. "We want to talk to Michael first and find out how he feels," Floyd said. "I'm anxious to hear what Michael is going to do just like everybody else."

"If he would feel more comfortable playing for somebody who is a logical choice for Jerry Reinsdorf or Jerry Krause, I would gladly step aside. Hopefully we will be able to sit down and talk about it."

Floyd has only three weeks to prepare for a 50-game season. The Bulls team he spent countless hours watching on videotapes during the labour fight might be totally different than the one which takes the court.

Only Toni Kukoc, Ron Harper, Randy Brown and Keith Booth are signed for the season. Jordan, Scottie Pippen and Dennis Rodman are free agents. So is starting center Luc Longley from Australia.

## Vikings crush Cardinals to advance

MINNEAPOLIS (AFP) — Randall Cunningham threw three touchdown passes and Minnesota beat Arizona 41-21 here Sunday, moving the Vikings one victory from their first Super Bowl berth since 1977.

Cunningham completed 17 of 27 passes for 236 yards while Robert Smith rushed for 124 yards and a touchdown for Minnesota, the highest-scoring team in American football history.

This will be Minnesota's first NFL semi-final berth since 1987.

The Vikings, this season's winningest American football team at 15-1, host Atlanta next Sunday in the National Conference title game, the first NFL semi-final ever played in a domed stadium.

"This will probably be the best team we have played all year and we have not played our best game yet," Minnesota coach Dennis Green said. "They have a great running game."

That's going to be the big challenge." Because both Atlanta and Minnesota have dome homes, the Super Bowl is assured of having its first participant from a domed stadium.

The Atlanta-Minnesota winner will face either the New York Jets or reigning champion Denver in the Super Bowl at Miami on January 31. The Vikings are 0-4 in Super Bowls, losing in 1970, 1974, 1975 and 1977.

"We believe it's our destiny to win this time," Minnesota receiver Chris Carter said.

Minnesota finished 15-1 in the regular season, something done only twice before, each time by the eventual NFL champion. Atlanta finished 14-2 and ousted San Francisco 30-18 on Saturday.

Asked if he had any secrets about how Atlanta might conquer the Vikings, Arizona's Aeneas Williams compared the matchup to Mike

Tyson's heavyweight showdowns with Evander Holyfield.

"It's like when Mike Tyson was at his peak," Williams said. "He intimidated everyone before they got in the ring. You have to take your shots and keep on swinging. That's what Evander Holyfield did."

Arizona pulled within 24-21 with 11:45 remaining on Mario Bates' third one-yard touchdown run of the game, but the Cardinals could not score again and failed in a bid to be the first sixth seed to reach the NFL semi-finals.

Minnesota's Antonio Banks recovered a Jake Plummer fumble to set up Randall Cunningham's two-yard touchdown pass to rookie sensation Randy Moss, giving the Vikings a 34-14 lead.

Moss has caught at least one touch-

down pass in his past eight games.

"Our guys were real sharp. We took good advantage of the time off," Green said. "We're always satisfied when we win but we know we have a lot more to do."

Robert Smith's one-yard touchdown run put Minnesota ahead 7-0 into the game, with the Vikings owning the ball all but three plays of the first quarter.

Cunningham threw second quarter touchdown passes to Andrew Glover and Leroy Hoard and Anderson added a 34-yard field goal to give the Vikings a 24-7 half-time lead.

Arizona's first points came on a Bates run, which came after a Vikings' penalty on fourth down gave the Cardinals another set of downs to try and reach the end zone from a yard away.

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## New government wins Turkish president's approval, crisis ending

ANKARA (AP) — President Süleyman Demirel gave his approval Monday to a new administration led by pro-secular leader Bülent Ecevit, potentially ending Turkey's six-week-old government crisis.

Ecevit's main challenge as premier-designate had been putting together a government that excluded the Islamic-oriented Virtue Party, the largest single bloc in the 550-member parliament.

Turkey's previous coalition government, also pro-secular, collapsed in a corruption scandal in November.

Ecevit's proposed cabinet is formed only of members of his small Democratic Left Party and three independents.

However, the minority government has pledged support from the centre-right True Path and Motherland parties, meaning it can easily pass a parliamentary vote of confidence set for Sunday.

One concession Ecevit was forced to make was to remove the popular education minister, whose pro-secular education reforms angered Islamic-oriented voters. The concession was demanded by True Path

leader Tansu Çiller, who is apparently targeting religious votes.

The education minister, Hikmet Uluğbay, instead was named deputy premier.

Ecevit, 73, is expected to govern until April 18 parliamentary elections.

He is a staunch supporter of the secular principles of Turkey, an overwhelmingly Islamic country with a strictly secular constitution.

The military, which has staged three coups in the last four decades, pressured an Islamic-led government out of power two years ago.

The generals remain vigilant against the rise of Islamic movement, warning against any move toward political power in three statements last week.

With Demirel's approval, Ecevit returns to power 20 years after he last held the premier post.

Ecevit oversaw Turkey's invasion into Cyprus in 1974 as prime minister.

He supports a hard-line foreign policy in relations with the European Union and with regard to the Mediterranean island of Cyprus, which is divided between two heavily armed Greek- and Turkish-allied blocs.

Ecevit was instrumental in

getting Turkey to suspend relations with EU last year after the 15-nation group refused to include it on a list of candidates eligible to join.

He also advocates reviewing a customs union agreement with the EU, claiming it works to Turkey's disadvantage.

Ecevit renamed Ismail Cem as foreign minister. No changes were expected in Turkey's foreign policy.

The new government will be busy with Turkey's pressing economic troubles, including high unemployment and inflation.

Negotiations with the International Monetary Fund were expected to start soon.

Ecevit's government is the sixth since the last elections held in 1995.

Ecevit tried for three weeks to form a government when he was first designated in early December, but failed to rally enough support in parliament.

He was reappointed after an independent lawmaker also proved unsuccessful.

Divisions between centre right and social democrat parties leave pro-secular parties weak and fragmented in parliament to the advantage of the Islamic party.



FRENCH TEAM REACHES SOUTH POLE: Recent photo in Antarctica of five members of an elite French army ski team who reached the South Pole Jan. 9 after skiing for 1,350 kms from Gould Bay (AFP photo)

## Japan presents proposal for Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon

### Syria willing to talk to Israel — Japanese FM

TEL AVIV (AP) — Japanese Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura on Monday presented a four-point plan for an Israeli troop withdrawal from Lebanon and his Israeli counterpart, Ariel Sharon, hailed the ideas as "impressive."

Komura also showed the proposal to senior government officials in Syria and Lebanon who, according to Komura's aide, Masaki Okada, were willing to consider it, but had reservations.

The plan appears to be the most ambitious effort yet by Japan to become more actively involved in Mideast peacemaking. Japan's role until now has been largely confined to giving aid to various projects linked to the peace process.

Under the plan, Israel would agree to withdraw its troops unilaterally from southern Lebanon, but the two sides would "discuss the concrete steps" of the pullback.

Israel has said it was ready to pull out of Lebanon, provided the Lebanese government agreed to negotiate

security arrangements to protect northern Israel from future guerrilla attacks. Lebanon has refused to hold talks, saying Israel was required under U.N. Security Council Resolution 425 to pull out unconditionally.

Okada said Lebanese and Syrian officials had reservations about negotiating the pullback with Israel. Before arriving in Israel, Komura met with Lebanese Prime Minister Salim Hoss and Syrian President Hafez Al Assad.

The Japanese initiative also calls for a resumption of Israeli-Syrian peace talks once the pullout is completed and offers Japanese mediation to all the parties involved.

Okada, the ministry spokesman, said that "they [Lebanon and Syria] still have some reservations there. Generally speaking, they support our initiative."

Okada emphasised that Syrian support was critical to any agreement. Syria is the main power broker in Lebanon.

After meeting with Komura, Sharon responded positively.

"I was very impressed by the Japanese proposal regarding a solution for Lebanon," Sharon said, adding that he would welcome Japanese mediation.

Sharon supports a staged unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon, but Israel's security cabinet recently rejected that proposal.

The foreign ministers also discussed Iran's development and purchases of long-range missiles.

The Iranians have assured Japan in meetings of top officials that they "won't disturb the progress of the Middle East peace process and doesn't support terrorism," Okada said.

Komura, meanwhile, said Syria has not lost interest in peace negotiations with Israel which broke off in 1996.

"I am afraid I can't say that the situation is optimistic," Komura said, speaking through a translator.

"However, I urged the Syrians strongly to renew these negotiations, and President Assad showed a certain amount of understanding for this," the minister said ahead of a meeting

with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

In Damascus on Saturday, Okada said the negotiations were deadlocked because of the policies of Israel's current government.

Reports have said that at the time talks were suspended, Netanyahu's dovish predecessors agreed in principle to return all of the Golan Heights, which Israel captured from Syria in the 1967 Mideast war, in exchange for appropriate security arrangements.

The Syrians have demanded that the Netanyahu government recognise the understandings that were reached with the previous Israeli government, but Netanyahu has refused. Netanyahu opposes far-reaching territorial concessions to Syria.

Israel is Komura's last stop on a week-long Middle East tour that included Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and the Palestinian areas. He also met with Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai and opposition Labour Party leader Ehud Barak, who is running against Netanyahu in the May 17 elections.

## Ten Palestinians arrested in connection with shooting Israeli army lifts Hebron blockade

HEBRON (AFP) — Ten Palestinians have been arrested in connection with last week's shooting attack here that wounded two Jewish settlers. Palestinian security officials said Monday.

Palestinian police arrested eight men in raids in the centre of Hebron over the past two days while Israeli troops apprehended another two in areas of the city which fall under their control, the officials said.

Most of the detainees are believed to be members of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) and Islamic Jihad, they said.

As the arrests were made

public, some 150 members of the Israeli right-wing Women In Green movement marched amid heavy security from the nearby Jewish settlement of Kiryat Arba to the centre of the old city of Hebron, witnesses said.

The women, protesting what they called a lack of sufficient protection for the 400 Jewish settlers living in Hebron's centre, carried Israeli flags and waved banners reading "Jewish life is not cheap."

Witnesses said one group of women carried a cartoon of a skeleton modelled on Palestinian President Yasser Arafat.

There were no reports of any violence during the march, which came after the Israeli army lifted a blockade and partial curfew imposed on this divided city a week ago following the shooting of the settler women.

The blockade prevented 140,000 Palestinians from entering or leaving Hebron, while the curfew affected 20,000 people living in the Israeli-controlled part of the city.

The measures were imposed after gunmen shot and wounded two settler women, sparking fierce clashes between Palestinians and Israeli troops.

## Yemeni mediators ready to pay ransom to free Briton

SANAA (AFP) — Mediators negotiating the release of a kidnapped British oil worker are prepared to pay a ransom, tribal leaders said Monday as news emerged that two Americans had narrowly escaped abduction in Yemen.

"The mediators are determined to get him freed even if they have to pay," one of the tribal chiefs involved in the negotiations told AFP.

A spokesperson for the British embassy in Sanaa would say only that negotiations were continuing and "very close contact" was being maintained with the authorities.

John Brooke, who works for U.S. oil firm Halliburton, was captured Saturday by armed men from the Al Juayd tribe in eastern Yemen where his company is engaged in exploration work.

Brooke, from Norwich in eastern England but who has been working in Yemen for 12 years, was captured in the mountains near Marib, 180 kilometres northeast of the capital Sanaa.

Police say the tribesmen have demanded the release from jail of one of their men who is facing a murder and theft charge.

A Yemeni newspaper said Kadi Ben Aujan is accused, among a list of 17 crimes, of killing a sheikh of the Bani Al Hareth, a rival tribe.

The mediation team of three Al Juayd chiefs and two

other respected figures from the Marib region, began work on Sunday night and had made unspecified propositions. The kidnappers had so far not replied, tribal leaders said.

Official sources in Sanaa said security services had deployed in the area in an effort to put pressure on the kidnappers, but that they would not use force.

In London, the Foreign Office said Sunday that Brooke was in good shape despite his ordeal. The British embassy in Sanaa on Monday added: "We haven't heard anything to suggest things have changed."

Ambassador Victor Henderson spoke with Yemen's Prime Minister Abdul Karim Al Iryani on Sunday, but the embassy refused comment on the substance of their talks.

Diplomatic sources said the embassy was also trying to arrange a meeting with President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

Brooke's abduction came less than two weeks after 16 western tourists were kidnapped by Islamic militants in southern Yemen.

A rescue attempt by security forces turned into a bloodbath which left four of the hostages, three Britons and an Australian, dead.

There was no indication that Islamic militants were involved in the latest kidnapping.

## Albright advises against clemency for Pollard

WASHINGTON (AP) — Secretary of State Madeleine Albright has advised President Bill Clinton to deny clemency to Jonathan Pollard, a former U.S. Navy analyst in prison for life for providing secret documents to Israel, a senior U.S. official said Monday.

Albright, in a confidential recommendation, told Clinton there was no foreign policy reason to release Pollard, who was convicted of espionage, and no basis for overriding the judgement of the U.S. intelligence community, the official told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

Clinton is expected to make a decision soon. Albright's advice combined with the known opposition of CIA Director George Tenet could seal Pollard's fate.

Albright's stance on the Pollard case implies she sees no shock to U.S. relations with Israel if Pollard remains imprisoned.

Last week, the Senate Intelligence Committee's two top members, concerned Clinton may grant clemency to Pollard, urged other senators to join them in a letter to the president asking him not to do so.

Sen. Richard Shelby, the committee chairman, said he had encouraged Clinton "to rethink what I understand may be his expected course of action."

He was backed by virtually all members of the committee.

Pollard was convicted as a spy for handing over thousands of top-secret documents to Israel in 1984 and 1985.

Clinton confirmed last month that he promised Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at U.S.-sponsored negotiations with the Palestinians in October that he would look into Netanyahu's request for leniency for Pollard.

White House counsel Charles Ruff was directed to solicit views of U.S. intelligence and security agencies. Several former U.S. intelligence officials hotly opposed clemency and asserted that Pollard attempted to provide classified information to other

countries before striking a deal with Israel.

The Justice Department's criminal division adamantly opposes clemency, senior officials said Thursday, requesting anonymity.

Attorney General Janet Reno said she would send Ruff a recommendation by Monday.

At the Pentagon, spokesman Kenneth Bacon noted: "The Pentagon has been strongly opposed to the release of Jonathan Pollard in the past, and I don't expect any change from that position."

Lebanese President Emile Lahoud and Prime Minister Salim Hoss also have reiterated the need to further consolidate ties with Syria, which is the main powerbroker in Lebanon and maintains some 35,000 troops there.

With the escalation of the violence has come an increased debate in Israel about the wisdom of its occupation of southern Lebanon.

Twenty-four Israeli soldiers were killed there last year and 39 the year before.

But as one Western diplomat put it, both the Hizbollah and Israel remain headstrong, leaving little hope for either side "to escape the Lebanese quagmire."

## Lebanon fears 'election campaign' from Israeli military

By Jacques Lhuillery  
Agence France Presse

BEIRUT — A recent escalation of Israeli-Hizbollah violence has raised fears that embattled Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu could use southern Lebanon to try to boost his stature before national elections in May.

Netanyahu is "killing innocent people, women and children for the sake of his electoral campaign," said former Lebanese Foreign Minister Fares Bouez.

The situation brings back horrific memories of April 1996, just before the Jewish state's last general elections, when Prime Minister Shimon Peres waged a major two-week offensive in Lebanon.

The 17-day "Grapes of Wrath" onslaught — ostensibly in response to repeated rocket attacks on northern Israel by the Hizbollah militia — left 175 dead, most of them civilians.

That operation was officially meant to "crush" Hizbollah, but it was clear that Peres wanted to prove to the Israeli electorate an intransigence in matters of security equal to that of Netanyahu, who defeated him.

Now the tables have turned and many fear a weakened Netanyahu — who after the collapse of his ruling coalition was forced to call for May elections — will unleash a tough military campaign on Lebanon.

Israel's Haaretz newspaper reported Sunday that

even Washington, a close ally, fears the prime minister will attack — perhaps even Syrian targets in Lebanon — in a bid to revive his flagging popularity.

The U.S. concerns grew after the Israeli government issued a formal warning earlier this month that it would carry out harmful reprisals if Lebanese guerrillas carried out new rocket attacks on northern Israel, it said.

Violence has mounted in the region since the Dec. 22 Israeli air raid that killed a mother and her six children in the Bekaa valley in eastern Lebanon, triggering a cycle of daily attacks and counterattacks.

Hizbollah also twice launched rockets into northern Israel, wounding

16 civilians.

It did not take long for Netanyahu to implement his threat to strike Lebanon's infrastructure in response to guerrilla attacks on Israeli targets in the zone and northern Israel.

Israeli bombardments over the weekend damaged electricity and water installations in southern Lebanon.

Lebanon is the cemetery of Israeli governments, said Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, secretary general of the Shiite Muslim Hizbollah which spearheads the guerrilla war to force Israel out of southern Lebanon.

Several Lebanese MPs have called on the Beirut government to launch an international campaign to

alert public opinion about the Israeli threats.

Lebanese President Emile Lahoud and Prime Minister Salim Hoss also have reiterated the need to further consolidate ties with Syria, which is the main powerbroker in Lebanon and maintains some 35,000 troops there.

With the escalation of the violence has come an increased debate in Israel about the wisdom of its occupation of southern Lebanon.

Twenty-four Israeli soldiers were killed there last year and 39 the year before.

But as one Western diplomat put it, both the Hizbollah and Israel remain headstrong, leaving little hope for either side "to escape the Lebanese quagmire."



### Tribes halt war for road-building

JAKARTA (R) — Warring tribes in a remote forest region in Indonesia's Irian Jaya have suspended hostilities so that they can watch a road being built, the Jakarta Post reported Monday. "This is the first time for these people to see motorcycles and other vehicles," a local official said. The newspaper said some people had walked for four days through the forests of the vast, primitive eastern province to marvel at helicopters arriving at the construction site bringing motorcycles, trucks and construction equipment. It said battles between different tribes in the Tinggi Nambut village had been temporarily stopped so tribal warriors could watch the proceedings.

### Official plans chess match with murderer

LONDON (R) — After 30 years of playing postal chess with a convicted U.S. murderer and failing to win a single game, British local councillor John Walker has decided it is time for a face-to-face meeting in jail. Walker said he had applied for permission to play a game next August against Claude Bloodgood, who is serving a life sentence in Richmond, Virginia for murdering his mother in 1969. The two have been playing postally since Walker answered an advertisement from Bloodgood in a British chess magazine in the 1970s. "The first game took seven years to complete as prison officials held up Walker's letters containing his moves."

### Peru exports its answer to Viagra

LIMA (AFP) — Peruans will soon begin exporting to Japan an Andean plant that many here claim is the country's natural answer to sex potency drug Viagra. Used as a traditional remedy in Peru since pre-Hispanic times, the plant known as maca contains proteins, amino acids and vitamins, along with high concentrations of calcium, phosphorus and zinc. Devotees say this mix is a powerful sexual stimulant. "The Japanese government has authorised imports of Andean maca, so we will be out there competing with Viagra," Agriculture Minister Belisario Campos announced Thursday with a coy smile.

### Prisoner wants sentence cut by one second

MIAMI (R) — A Cuban-born prisoner is seeking a retroactive one-second reduction in his 365-day jail term to avoid deportation under a U.S. law targeting felons who "save sentences of a year or more," the Miami Herald said. The prisoner, Jorge De Cardenas, is a lobbyist sentenced to 365 days in jail for obstructing justice in a contract kickback scheme at Miami City Hall. De Cardenas finished his sentence on Dec. 12. But instead of being freed he was turned over to the U.S. Immigration and Naturalisation Service and is being held at a Louisiana jail under a 1996 law allowing them to detain for deportation criminal aliens.

### Quiz addict returns to school for TV bid

LONDON (AP) — Lance Haward was a man with a dream: He wanted to appear on the television quiz show "University Challenge." So the 62-year-old self-confessed quiz show addict enrolled at the Open University, a non-residential college for adult students of all ages, to study classical Greek — though he hastens to add he was motivated by a love of learning. "Let's just say I was killing two birds with one stone," said Haward, who has appeared on about a dozen quiz shows, ranging from "Mastermind" to "The Century."